

State of Interreligious Movement Report  
June 2008

# **State of the Interreligious Movement Report**

**A Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions Publication**

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## **Editor's Note**

This Report presents illustrative examples of fifteen religious traditions participating in the interreligious movement. Examples of multi-religious and independent facilitation of the interreligious movement are also presented. All of the examples have been compiled using the following three methods: (1) researchers have searched organizational webpages, community newsletters, and other relevant websites selecting pertinent public information, (2) researchers have contacted interreligious practitioners to solicit information on their work, and (3) the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions has sent an email to thousands of its contacts soliciting information on their current activities. These examples have been reviewed by the editor and selected for publication in this report according to their illustrative effect.

These methods of collection are necessarily limited, due to the often ad hoc and informal quality of much interreligious work. We have also been limited, for the most part, to examples in the English language. And, of course, many people in the world – including participants in the interreligious movement – are not readily accessible by email or phone. What is more, we simply do not understand the varieties of religious life well enough to identify examples of interreligious work that are not relatively obvious. The list could go on and on. Nonetheless, we have tried to convey a representative portrait of whatever in the interreligious movement has been accessible to our methodological reach.

The categories dividing “A Snapshot of the Interreligious Movement” are used only because of their familiarity. The use of terms like “New Religious Movements” and “Indigenous” has been reluctant at best; these are fraught and often exploited terms and we look forward to a time when better, more representative language becomes available. For that matter, this document does not purport to decide who counts as a “Hindu” or a “Jew” or a “Christian” or a “Muslim” or anything else. The examples provided below are offered with an implicit invitation to constructive criticism and the assumption of future revisions.

The Report uses the terms “interreligious” and “interfaith” somewhat interchangeably throughout; in the first of three critical essays, “The Interfaith Movement: An Incomplete Assessment,” good reasons are provided to prefer the term “interfaith.” But this report has sided with the term “interreligious” for its title. Historical and theoretical considerations, elaborated in the second and third essays, suggest that this usage of the term “faith” is epiphenomenal to a field of meaning already established by the modern category of religion. The contentious and fraught category of religion has, therefore, been retained to provoke further reflection on its nuances: to clarify, for instance, why it might seem attractive to translate this concept into the language of “faith.”

This report could not have been produced without the outstanding efforts of an entire team of researchers and reviewers. The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions would like to thank the volunteer research team of Adam Dichson, Brooke Heerwald, LeAnne Clausen, and Michelle Townsend and our research assistants Katerina

Sokolova, Kyeongil Jung and Pangernungba. We would also like to give special thanks to Kusumita Pedersen, Travis Rejman, and Matt Weiner. In addition, the “Gathering of Experts” at the 2007 Forum of World Cultures in Monterrey, Mexico made invaluable comments. We would also like to thank the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* for allowing the inclusion of “The Interfaith Movement: An Incomplete Assessment” by Kusumita P. Pedersen, which originally appeared in the Winter 2004 issue of the *JES*.

Jeff Israel  
Editor  
Brooklyn, New York 2007

## **Introduction**

On September 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of 2007, forty-five religious leaders and scholars came together for a “Gathering of Experts” in Monterrey, Mexico. Each expert had just finished presenting at the *Encuentro Mundial Interreligioso*, a four day interreligious event that attracted thousands to the city of Monterrey. The participants in the Gathering were from a range of religious and spiritual traditions: Muslim, Pagan, Christian Protestant, Brahma Kumari, Jain, Christian Catholic, Sikh, Buddhist, Yoruba, Baha’i, and Hindu. For two days, these experts from all over the world discussed the challenges to religion and the interreligious movement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

While the diversity of the participants was reflected in the spectrum of views expressed at the Gathering, several common concerns did emerge. Participants shared concerns about the following challenges to religion in the coming years:

- ***Materialism and Spiritual Decline.*** Many participants were worried about rampant materialism and feared that the spread of consumerist values would exacerbate already declining spiritual vitality throughout the world. This concern reflects a broader anxiety about the homogenizing and spiritually deadening effects of globalization. People around the world are besieged by commercial advertising, emanating mostly from rich Western countries and regional economic powers. Public life is all too often saturated with products to buy and sell. Under these circumstances people begin to think of themselves in terms of what they own and what they can afford to buy. In general, the global reach of consumer culture is everywhere promoting the idea that a life devoted to the accumulation of wealth is the best life for human beings. This poses a direct threat to religious and spiritual traditions that assert a loftier purpose for human life.
- ***Profaning the Earth.*** Participants were also deeply concerned about protecting the Earth from ecological disaster and expressed a desire to mobilize religious and spiritual people on behalf of the environment. Religious and spiritual traditions that hold the Earth to be sacred cannot abide the destructive effects of human behavior on the rest of the natural world. In place of the greed and myopia that govern much of our current interaction with nature, such traditions counsel reverence, humility, and a long-term commitment to sustainable harmony between human beings and the Earth. The threat to the environment is not just bad for people in the long-run, it is a violation of something held sacred by people all over the world.
- ***Domination and Exploitation.*** There was a broad sense among the participants that powerful self-interested nations and corporations pose a profound threat to religious and spiritual life. Too many people around the world suffer amidst violence and chaos caused by the self-interested policies of powerful nations (and the smaller surrogate nations and factions that they support). Too many people in poorer regions of the world, and in the shadows of wealthy societies, toil under

conditions of near slavery to fill the shopping malls of rich nations with cheap goods. These conditions are intolerable to religious and spiritual traditions that are devoted to justice. And they are a persistent obstacle to religious and spiritual flourishing.

- **Radicalism.** There was grave concern among participants that religious and spiritual traditions are being hijacked by their most radical adherents. Many suggested that the radical elements in each tradition must be opposed from within. Religious and spiritual demagogues and opportunists readily exploit the devotion of their traditions' adherents in order to pursue radical (and often self-interested) aims. Only credible, legitimate leaders and movements from within each tradition can effectively oppose such demagoguery and opportunism. It is particularly important for religious and spiritual moderates to wrest the education of young people from the hands of radicals. Without proactive opposition, religious and spiritual radicalism can threaten the very identity and meaning of religion and spirituality.

By their presence at the Gathering, and in their remarks, all involved indicated agreement about something else: religious and spiritual people, from all traditions, will have to work together if they want to thrive together in a better world. Most of the participants had been involved in interreligious work for a long time and were veterans of the interreligious movement. The interreligious movement is a growing network of individuals, groups, communities, programs, organizations, and institutions building positive relationships across religious differences. The movement includes activities at every level of scale: from ad hoc local interactions between individuals identifying with different religious traditions, to highly organized global initiatives bringing established religious leaders and institutions into positive contact.

As a result of their extensive experience in the movement, the participants recognized and discussed a set of challenges that they will face as the movement continues to grow. The Gathering focused its discussion on six problems identified by Professor Kusumita Pedersen (in "The Interfaith Movement: An Incomplete Assessment," reprinted below):

- **The One-Global Organization Problem:** "Some have ... seen international interfaith work as necessarily leading toward one global institution, a single officially representative council of the religions with a permanent secretariat supporting it. The difficulty with this concept is that there actually are in existence a good number of interfaith organizations that are global in their aspirations. ... The direct result of this ambition has been to create intense competition between international organizations, vying for association with the U.N., funding, and the participation of important religious leaders, as well as publicity and general support." (Pg. 234 below)
- **The "Representivity" Problem:** "[R]eligions differ exceedingly in their structures of authority, and most are polycentric rather than centralized." (Pg. 235

below) “[I]nterreligious divisions and differences are so deep and bitter, and the ‘common task’ they attempt is so immense, that officially representative gatherings on the international level tend to issue vacuous, nonspecific, and nonbinding statements declaring in general terms that peace is good, poverty is bad, we must save the environment, children are the future, we need to work together, and the like.” (Pg. 235) “[I]f a religious body does not give high priority to interfaith activity but is requested to assign an official representative, it may not designate the most capable or committed person.” (Pg. 235).

- **The Inclusion-Exclusion Problem:** “This is the ‘We won’t join if the so-and-so’s are there’ or the ‘It’s us or them’ problem. The question may revolve around the membership or participation of new religious movements or self-declared new religions seen as “cults” or as deviant by older religious entities. It may just as well turn on very old divisions between sub-traditions of a religion or between religions themselves.” (Pg. 235 below)
- **The Role of Christians:** “In international interfaith organizations the staff professionals running the organizations day-to-day are often of Christian background. ...the majority of publications on interreligious questions are by Christian theologians. ... [and] the ecumenical church-bureaucracy [has been a] model [of] hopes for a world interfaith organization.” (Pg. 236 below)
- **The “Abrahamic” Question:** Sometimes disproportionate emphasis is given to interfaith work between Christians, Muslims, and Jews. “Dialogue and cooperation among the Abrahamic faiths are not only of great intrinsic importance but are also essential to interfaith work’s ultimate goals of global peace and understanding. They should be pursued, however, without regarding the non-Abrahamic religious traditions as inferior or their issues as of little consequence.” (Pg. 237 below)
- **Religion and “Spirituality”:** A growing “emphasis on ‘spirituality’ rather than ‘religion’ presents a challenge to all those who deal primarily in terms of official representation and the historical religions.” (Pg. 237 below)

Finally, resolute in their commitment to meet these challenges to religion and the interreligious movement, the participants reviewed a draft of this report: an account of people from diverse religious and spiritual traditions pursuing a better world through interreligious cooperation, understanding, and friendship.

\* \* \*

The *State of the Interreligious Movement Report* is meant to provide an illustrative snapshot of contemporary interreligious activities of all kinds. Since the interreligious movement is emerging in a practically infinite array everywhere around the world, it would be impossible to provide a comprehensive picture of its participants and

activities. Instead, this report presents something more like an impressionistic collage, with the hope of capturing the eclectic momentum of a movement still emerging.

The Report is meant to serve two main purposes. First, those unaware of the interreligious work that is bringing religious and spiritual people together all over the globe will find an introductory glimpse into this exciting and important movement. Second, those already involved in the interreligious movement can learn from a diverse sample of what other like-minded people are doing.

More than anything, this report is an invitation from the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, soliciting your help as we try to imagine the present and future of the interreligious movement. From readers who are learning about the range of contemporary interreligious work for the first time, we ask: given the examples presented here, what can your personal and professional experience contribute to the interreligious movement? How can the interreligious movement provide opportunities that will help you to bring about a better world?

From readers who are already committed participants in the movement we are more demanding; we ask: is your tradition well represented? Have we successfully illustrated the diversity of your tradition's interreligious participation? Which organizations, events, or initiatives are not presented, but must be included in any representative sample of your tradition's interreligious participation? How can we better represent the diversity of groups and individuals identifying with your tradition (the range of denominations, non-traditional practitioners, regional differences, doctrinal disagreements, etc.)? Has the interreligious movement been well represented as a whole? Which types of interreligious activity have we not included, or not included sufficiently, but must be included in any representative snapshot of the interreligious movement? Which religious and spiritual traditions involved in the interreligious movement have not been included? Has an important aspect of the interreligious movement been left out? What can be added, subtracted, or altered in this document in order to make it an outstanding illustration of the contemporary interreligious movement?

This is ***emphatically*** an evolving document: it should become more illustrative and fair as readers like you respond with comments and additional examples. Since no amount of research can grasp all of the interreligious work teeming in every place on earth, this Report is meant only to be a magnet: drawing in the varieties of interreligious experience of all those who stumble upon it. Please send your comments to [report@cpwr.org](mailto:report@cpwr.org).

\* \* \*

The "Snapshot of the Interreligious Movement," below, is divided into sections that portray the involvement of fifteen religious and spiritual traditions in the interreligious movement. The diversity of interreligious work uncovered in the research process has been extraordinary, including: organizations, camps, television shows, books, press releases, photography exhibits, youth and adult educational curricula, trips, declarations, conferences, newsletters, regular dinners, fellowships, lectures, blogs, websites, manufacturers, ethical investment funds, sporting events, academic programs, awards, gardens, film viewings, and media-watchdog groups – all bringing diverse



religious individuals, communities, groups, organizations, and institutions together in positive ways.

While not surprising, given that the research for this report was limited to English language sources, it is worth noting that certain words and phrases tend to crop up when participants in the interreligious movement explain themselves. Some of the words that appear most regularly in these materials are: respect, dignity, explore, peace, dialogue, education, “since September 11, 2001,” tolerance, understanding, and “social justice.” It is left to you to decide whether the frequency of these terms and phrases reflects a merely coincidental overlap of vocabulary between otherwise very distinct religious traditions, or if the interreligious movement has forged its own vocabulary that now thrives independently.

Some more apparent commonalities are also worth thinking about. Even though the interreligious work collected below illustrates the full extent of the movement’s diversity (as much as possible), it is hard not to notice a few types of work that emerge as particularly popular. People from diverse religious and spiritual traditions, who choose to reach out to one another, seem to gravitate toward activities that allow them to share their traditions and concerns, cultivate leaders from among their youth, support original research, provide social services, share the experience of art, advocate for common interests, declare shared commitments, and pray together. On the other hand, you will quickly find many ambiguous and unique cases below.

A sophisticated analytical assessment that goes beyond the sample covered in the snapshot is provided in the first of three critical essays about the interreligious movement and its context. In “The Interfaith Movement: An Incomplete Assessment,” Kusumita P. Pedersen, Professor of Religious Studies at St. Francis College in Brooklyn, New York, offers a comprehensive study of current scholarship on the interreligious movement (she uses the term “interfaith,” for reasons which she explains). It is reprinted with the generous permission of the Journal of Ecumenical Studies, a leading journal in the field. Pedersen’s essay describes interreligious work at the local, sub-national/national, and international level and surveys trends relative to geographical location. Her essay also reviews important issues facing the interreligious movement as it continues to grow.

The second and third essays attempt to elucidate the meaning and significance of the interreligious movement by addressing the history of ideas out of which it has grown. In “Religion in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” the editor, Jeffrey Israel, attempts to address the general question: how should we imagine the role of religion in our world? He takes for granted that many often contradictory assumptions may seem intuitive when trying to answer this question.

For instance, any of the following statements might seem reasonable: “there has been a rise in religious nationalism in recent years,” or “there has been a decline in religious belief throughout the world as a result of secularization,” or “the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a threatening rise of religious fundamentalism,” or “religion is playing a newly central role in national and international politics,” or “we are on the brink of a world war between clashing religiously defined civilizations,” or “in the era of globalization religions are newly able to meet the material and spiritual needs of people around the world.” Israel’s essay attempts to illuminate the meaning and significance of statements

like these. He provides a conceptual map of contemporary religion intended to draw connections between religion, politics, culture, society, and much else.

In “What Counts as ‘Religion’ in the Interreligious Movement?” Israel provides still more context for the interreligious movement by reflecting on common assumptions about how to use the term “religion.” Israel presents five descriptions of religion commonly used, either implicitly or explicitly, in the literature and language of the interreligious movement. The primary purpose of the third essay is to think critically about our assumptions concerning the category of “religion” and the consequences of these assumptions.

\* \* \*

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century we will see social and political landscapes across the globe continue to change; new cultural and intellectual trends will give unexpected color and dimension to old ideas; scientific and technological innovations will surprise us with new opportunities to flourish and new problems that we must try to solve. Where will religion and spirituality stand in the flux and flow of our unfolding lives? Religious and spiritual people are already coming together, despite differences and historical antagonism, to guide our changing world toward justice, peace, and sustainability. The picture of the interreligious movement captured below should make vivid an extraordinary possibility: in the next century religious and spiritual diversity need not persist as a source of conflict, but can instead emerge as potent source of hope.

## **A Snapshot of the Interreligious Movement**

### **Baha'i**

Title: ***"Interfaith Dialogue Policy Statement"***

Address: N/A  
Iceland

Contact: N/A

Description: "The Baha'i community of Iceland joined with twelve other faith groups and collaborative partners here to form the country's first national interfaith forum last month.

The Iceland Forum for Interfaith Dialogue was officially founded on 24 November 2006 in ceremonies at the Reykjavik City Hall.

"The object of the Forum is to promote tolerance and respect between persons of different religions and religious organizations with differing outlooks on life as well as to protect religious freedom and other human rights," said Ingibjorg Danielsdottir, secretary of the Baha'i community of Iceland.

This initiative was put together by the Intercultural Center in Reykjavik. The Center is a human rights advocacy organization based in Iceland. One of this organization's main areas of focus is in facilitating exchange between different cultures and groups. The Forum took some 18 months of patient negotiations to create.

The president of Iceland, Olafur Ragnar Grimsson, was present at the City Hall ceremonies that launched the Forum, as were representatives of the thirteen founding faith and belief communities.

The founding groups drafted and signed an "Interfaith Dialogue Policy Statement." The document calls for the building of understanding and respect, as well as the upholding of religious freedom between persons and religious organizations.

The President of Iceland, Mr. Olafur Ragnar Grimsson (front row - third from the left), with the founding members of the Iceland Forum for Interfaith Dialogue.

"As Baha'is we feel that we have a unique perspective to offer this type of dialogue," said Bridget McEvoy, a member of the Baha'i community who worked closely on the Forum's creation. "A central feature in the Baha'i Faith is the unity of religion and we want to be involved in any activity that promotes this idea.

"Understanding different cultures has become an important issue in Iceland during recent times," said Ms. McEvoy. "With the inclusion of Iceland into the European Economic Area and the European Single Market many people have chosen to move to Iceland to work. We have lots of cross border work opportunities, a good standard of living and have traditionally thought of ourselves as being an open society."

Ms. McEvoy said that the creation of this Forum would help ensure that Iceland's traditional openness to different cultures would be maintained.

"As Baha'is this process is important to us and we see a lot of value in it," said Ms. McEvoy. "Therefore we were very happy to have been invited to participate in the creation of the Forum for Inter Faith Dialogue."

In addition to the Baha'i community of Iceland, founding members of the Forum are: The Cross, Reykjavik Free Church, The Buddhist Association of Iceland, The Lutheran State Church of Iceland, The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, The Church of the Seventh Day Adventists, The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWU), The Muslim Association of Iceland, The Icelandic Asatru Society, The Parish of St. Nicholas of the Russian Orthodox Church, The Roman Catholic Church, and The Way Free Church."

Source: <http://news.bahai.org/story/498>

Title: ***Day of Prayer for World Peace***

Address: Specific Address is not available: Baha'i communities from various countries participate in hosting the interfaith prayers

Description: "Baha'is around the world -- from Cote d'Ivoire to Uruguay, from Thailand to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands -- hosted interfaith prayer gatherings in their homes, schools and community centers to mark the opening of the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, which was held at the United Nations 28-29 August 2000.

The prayers came in response to a call, issued on 3 August 2000, for people everywhere to observe a Day of Prayer for World Peace on the Summit's opening day. The Summit brought together more than 1,000 spiritual and religious leaders representing every major world religion in an effort to "forge a partnership of peace."

Among the local and national events hosted by Baha'is in support of the Summit were:

The Baha'is of Dominica hosted a prayer gathering in an auditorium at the University of West Indies Centre in Roseau. Prayers from 13 of the religions represented at the Summit were read, and the program closed with a quotation from "The Promise of World Peace," a statement to the peoples of the world issued in 1985 by the Universal House of Justice, the international governing council of the Baha'i Faith.

In Mauritius, the National Spiritual Assembly invited representatives of the Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu communities to a prayer gathering at the Baha'i Institute in Belle Rose. The event was covered by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation radio and television services. "Some 50 persons fervently joined in with their

prayers in a spiritual surge for the establishment of world peace," the Assembly reported.

Participants offer prayers during an interfaith meeting organized by the State Baha'i Council of Sikkim, India, on 28 August 2000 to mark the opening of the United Nations Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders.

In Ireland, representatives of several of the world's major faiths gathered at the Baha'i Centre in Dublin, Ireland, on 28 August to participate in a devotional program of extracts from Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Islamic, Zoroastrian and Sikh sacred texts. Each guest was presented with a flower blossom on arrival. After devotions and music, tea was served and the representatives of the various religions learned about each other's faiths and traditions in an atmosphere of goodwill. Irish Baha'is sponsored similar events in Cavan, Fingal (a suburb of Dublin), Co. Sligo, Shannon and Waterford.

In Cote d'Ivoire, the Baha'is of Abidjan and Dabou invited Animist, Jewish, Catholic and Muslim representatives to pray for peace at the Cocody Baha'i Center on 28 August 2000. The Ministry of Communication sent a representative. The invitation to the event was broadcast on the national radio, on the national television evening news, and in four articles in the main national newspapers. There were readings from the Old Testament, the Bible, the Koran and the Baha'i scriptures, followed by statements on world peace by the various religious representatives. Two major newspapers sent journalists to the event, and the following day the national radio broadcast an interview with the Baha'i, Christian and Muslim representatives. Similar events were held in Danan~~in~~ Bouak~~where~~ where two Imams came and the local television filmed the meeting, and in Ferke, where the Baha'is arranged a one-hour program on the local radio.

In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Baha'is held a devotional gathering at the Baha'i community center in Port Blair, and invited representatives of the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh communities to chant and recite prayers for world peace. About 60 people attended, and the event was covered by local newspapers and announced on the local bulletin of All India Radio.

In Thailand, the Santitham School, a Baha'i-run primary school in Yasothon, held a gathering of about 250 students, teachers and staff to pray for world peace on 31 August 2000. Three Buddhist monks, two Muslim representatives and three Catholic nuns were invited to share their prayers with the students. The Provincial Education Officer and the director of the District Education Office also attended. The Buddhist monks prayed in Bali for compassion toward all mankind and all living beings, and the Catholic nuns prayed that all mankind be safeguarded by the love of God. Several students recited Baha'i prayers for the unity of mankind. Local radio and television stations covered the event.

In India, the State Baha'i Council of Sikkim organised a prayer gathering at the Hotel Rendezvous in Gangtok on August 28. Although they had only four days to organise the event, the Baha'is sent out more than 100 invitations to dignitaries and religious leaders. Nearly everyone agreed to participate. The Governor of Sikkim, Choudhary Randhir Singh, attended along with representatives of the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Sikh, and Jain communities. News of the gathering was carried on the Sikkim cable television and several local and regional newspapers.

Other prayer gatherings were held at the Baha'i House of Worship in Panama City, Panama, at the Baha'i Centre in Luanda, Angola, and at the Baha'i Center in Montevideo, Uruguay."

Source: <http://news.bahai.org/story/63>

Title: **Participation in the *Project Million Lotus 2006***

Address: 110-D, Wishart Road  
Singapore 098733

Contact: (65) 6273 3023

Web: [www.bahai.org.sg](http://www.bahai.org.sg)

Description: Young members of the Baha'i community recently gave support to a national interfaith project aimed at bringing Singaporeans of all races and religions together.

About 40 youth gathered at the Singapore Baha'i Center on 15 April 2006 to fold paper lotuses as part of the Project Million Lotus 2006, which is sponsored by the Singapore Buddhist Federation.

The effort aims to have young people of all races and religions make a million paper lotuses as symbols of purity and harmony.

Source: <http://news.bahai.org/story/448>

Title: ***Baha'i Association at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology***

Address: N/A

Contact: N/A

Web: [www.cambridgebahais.org/mit/home](http://www.cambridgebahais.org/mit/home)

Description: "The purpose of the Baha'i Association at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is to promote the ideals of the Baha'i Faith, which includes consorting with members of all religions and backgrounds in the spirit of fellowship. Baha'is believe that religion should fundamentally be a source of unity; to that end, the Baha'i association hosts a number of events throughout the year, including socials, interfaith devotionals and dinners, and talks. One of our hopes is to instill a sense of unity that overcomes cultural, religious, and ideological barriers. Baha'is believe that religion is the source of a human being's highest aspirations and a powerful force capable of leading humankind to peace and unity."

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Baha'i Club invited 5 other faiths to participate in an interfaith dinner. Each group gave a 10 minute presentation answering the question "Is there a higher more desirable state for human beings (such as happiness, salvation, enlightenment, knowledge, etc)? If so who decides what is that state? And why should we trust that authority? About 80 people attended. Kosher, Halal, Vegetarian and regular dinners were served.

Source: Interns

Title: ***Models of Unity Studies***

Address: 1320 19th Street, NW Suite 701  
Washington, DC 20036

Contact: 202-833-8990

Description: "The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States has long been concerned that racial and religious conflict dominate discussion of intergroup relations in the media and in academic publishing. Believing that harmony and cooperation can exist among different races and religions, and that it can occur on an individual and personal basis as well as between organizations, the Assembly has conducted two studies of racial and religious amity to serve as a counterpoint and corrective to descriptions of intergroup conflict.

The results of the first investigation, co-sponsored by the Human Relations Foundation of Chicago, were published in February 1992, under the title "Models of Unity: Racial, Ethnic, and Religious":

"The results of the Models of Unity project were quite gratifying. The working hypothesis of the study – that a very large number and a very wide range of efforts to bring people together exist – was amply supported by the models that were found and the efforts that interviewees mentioned to the interviewers."

Source: <http://www.bahai.us/models-of-unity-studies>

Title: ***Participation in Inter-Religious Forum***

Address: N/A  
Malaysia

Contact: N/A

(Many organizations participated)

Description: Followers of all religions in Malaysia, including the Bahá'is attended an Inter-Religious Forum organized at the Ministry of National Unity. The aim of the forum was to encourage the unity of the diverse races and tribes in the country. In his speech, Minister Dr J.M. Ongkili said that with regards to religions, one must "respect and accept" and progressively move on to a higher level of "tolerance" and finally to "understanding and accommodation." On the panel were the Minister, the

Director-General of IKIM, the Chairperson of the Panel of Unity (comprising 53 retired top civil servants, politicians, academicians and public leaders) and the Director-General of JAKIM. The Minister invited the religious organizations to support a dialogue with the National Unity Panel to provide ideas towards fostering national unity

Source: <http://bahai.org.my/main/content/view/44/45>

Title: ***World Religion Day***  
Address: 1320 19th Street, NW Suite 701  
Washington, DC 20036  
Contact: 202-833-8990  
Description: Initiated in 1950 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, the U.S. Bahá'í administrative body. The Assembly's purpose was to call attention to the role of religion as the motivating force for world unity. World Religion Day is observed publicly every third Sunday in January.  
It is observed the third Sunday in January by Baha'is in the United States and increasingly by people around the globe. The day is celebrated by hosting interfaith discussions, conferences and other events that foster understanding and communication among the followers of all religions.

Source: <http://www.bahai.us/world-religion-day>

Title: ***Baha'i at the United Nations***  
Address: 1320 19th Street, NW Suite 701  
Washington, DC 20036  
Contact: 202-833-8990  
Description: The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States, the national governing body of the U.S. Baha'i community, has been represented at the United Nations since 1947.  
The Office collaborates with a variety of UN offices and specialized agencies. It also engages the U.S. Baha'i community in UN-related advocacy campaigns and works with nongovernmental organizations on issues related to human rights, social justice, sustainable development, the advancement of women and UN reform.  
Cooperating with UN, Baha'i made a great contribution to strengthening interfaith cooperation on international and social issues.

Source: <http://bahai.us/bahai-united-nations>

Title: ***Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity***  
Address: 866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 120  
New York, NY 10017-1822



Phone: 212-803-2547  
Fax: 212-803-2566  
Email: [info@globalprosperity.org](mailto:info@globalprosperity.org)  
Web: <http://www.globalprosperity.org>  
Description: The Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity (ISGP) is an incorporated, non-profit educational and research organization. Its mission is to provide a forum for the exploration of concepts and the analysis of programs of action that address the generation and application of knowledge and the development of appropriate social structures in order to achieve positive and enduring change for the betterment of society.

The Institute explores new concepts and models of social transformation. It seeks to foster fresh approaches to current social questions by examining the connections between the ethical, spiritual, and material dimensions of life. Its activities are inspired by the principles and ideals of the Bahá'í Faith.

The Institute engages in research, produces publications, and sponsors events such as conferences, seminars and symposia on issues relevant to the processes that shape an ever advancing civilization in search of global peace and prosperity

Source: <http://www.globalprosperity.org/>

## Buddhist

Title: ***The Jambudvipa Trust***  
Address: Plot no. 3 Survey No. 247/14B,  
Deccan College Rd., Yerawada, Pune 411006  
India.  
Phone: 91-20-26698420  
Contact: info@jambudvipa.org  
Web: http://www.jambudvipa.org  
Description: The Jambudvipa Trust's aim is to create a situation where people can transcend the caste barriers that are there within all the religions. The Trust envisages a society free of caste and other social barriers, in which all people, whatever their background can participate fully. Since in India the caste is stronger than the religion, the Trust tries to create conditions where people can transcend caste barriers. Therefore the Trust arranges conferences and workshops in order to make people from different backgrounds come together. It also arranges international conferences focused on these issues. Besides this the Trust campaigns and creates awareness about ill effects of the caste system.  
Source: Provided by Mangesh Dahiwal, Director

Title: ***Amida Trust***  
Address: Order of Amida Buddha The Buddhist House  
12 Coventry Road, Narborough LE19 2BR  
Leicestershire, UK  
Phone: 0116.286.7476  
Contact: prasada@amidatrust.com  
Web: http://www.amidatrust.com  
Description: Amida Trust is a Buddhist religious charity (non-profit) organization registered in England. It sponsors the Order of Amida Buddha and Amida-shu-Pureland Buddhist religious community. Maitri Project by Amida Trust is an inter-faith chaplaincy service in the city of Leicester offers "drop in," multi-faith volunteering, mental health support, "women and spirituality groups," professional counseling. And the Trust participates in "Leicester Council of Faiths" and "Leicester Faith Leaders Forum" and other city based multi-faith initiatives, and in national and international conferences on inter/multi-faith. Caroline Brazier, member of the Amida Order, is Buddhist representative on the national body developing standards for multi-faith hospital chaplaincy in UK.  
Source: Provided by Dharmavidya, Head of the Order

Title: ***The Buddha Savika Foundation***

Address: Songdhammakalyani Monastery,  
195 Petkasem Hwy., Muang Dist.  
Nakhonpathom 73000, Thailand  
Phone: 66 34 258270  
Contact: dhammananda99@hotmail.com  
Web: <http://www.thaibhikkhunis.org>  
Description: The Buddha Savika Foundation aims at uplifting women in general and Buddhist women in particular. We are interested to help establish fully ordained Buddhist nuns in various countries. We are interested to work with Socially Engaged Buddhists mentality, to uplift ourselves along with the upliftment of society and the world.  
Source: Provided by Ven. Dhammananda bhikkhuni

Title: ***Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development***  
Address: 29/15 Soi Ramkumheng 21,  
Ramkunhend Rd., A. Wangthonglang, Bangkok 10310  
Thailand  
Phone: (66-2)3147385-6  
Contact: semsikkha\_ram@yahoo.com  
Description: TICD was founded in 1980. Its primary mission is to involve Buddhist monks and nuns in issues of ethics, community development, public well-being, environmental conservation, and other relevant socio-economic and political issues. TICD promotes inter-religious dialogue among Buddhists, Muslims and Christians on different key issues such as peace and non-violence, environment reservation, gender, social justice, consumerism, endogenous people, and grassroots community development. In times of tension between religious communities, TICD as a major Buddhist organization has spoken out for Christians and Muslim friends. It has initiated a number of Buddhist-Muslim Dialogues, the first of its kind both within Siam, between Siam, Malaysia and Indonesia.  
Source: <http://www.sulak-sivaraksa.org/web/network21.php>

Title: ***The International Network of Engaged Buddhist Monks***  
Address: 666 Charoen Nakorn Road.  
Klong San Bangkok Siam 10600  
Thailand  
Phone: 66 2 860 2194  
Contact: ineboffice@yahoo.com  
Web: <http://www.inebnetwork.org>  
Description: The INEB's mission is to develop the perspective of socially engaged Buddhism; to promote understanding, cooperation and networking among inter-Buddhist and inter-religious social action groups; to act as center of information related to areas of interest; to facilitate

training and workshop that support and strengthen Buddhist and other socially active individuals and groups. The INEB has firm confidence in compassion, non-violence and co-existence as revealed by The Buddha. Confrontation with suffering, analysis and actions to put out suffering, particularly in the modern world context is the core mission. The issues of interest revolve around integration of spirituality and social activities. Issues that INEB emphasized included peace reconciliation, ecology, women issue and empowerment, health, education, human rights, community building, alternative development, role of spiritual leaders in modern world context, etc.

Source: <http://www.inebnetwork.org>

Title: ***The Institute of Oriental Philosophy***

Address: 1-236, Tangi-cho, Hachioji City  
Tokyo 192-0003  
Japan

Phone: 0426-91-6591

Contact: [iop\\_info@iop.or.jp](mailto:iop_info@iop.or.jp)

Web: <http://www.iop.or.jp>

Description: The Institute of Oriental Studies (IOP) was founded in February 1962 for the sake of clarifying the relevance of Buddhism and other world religions in the modern world. The IOP has also been actively engaged in encouraging interfaith dialogue. For example, in 1995, the institute cosponsored with the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, a multi-part Buddhist-Christian dialogue in the form of exchange symposiums and informal discussions. Likewise, IOP researchers have participated in interfaith seminars sponsored by the SGI and the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. These exchanges have sought to examine and compare Buddhist and Christian approaches to such core issues as prayer, salvation and the role of the clergy

Source: <http://www.iop.or.jp>

Title: ***Soka Gakkai International***

Address: SGI Headquarters  
Josei Toda International Center  
15-3 Samon-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, 160-0017  
Japan

Phone: 81-3-5360-9811

Web: <http://www.sgi.org>

Description: Soka Gakkai International (SGI) is a Buddhist association with more than 12 million members in 190 countries and territories worldwide. As lay believers and "engaged Buddhists," SGI members strive in their everyday lives to develop the ability to live with confidence, to create

value in any circumstances and to contribute to the well-being of friends, family and community. The promotion of peace, culture and education is central to SGI's activities. SGI is an active participant in interfaith dialogues and events. It cosponsors with the European Academy of Sciences and Arts a regular series of interfaith dialogues on issues such as environmental problems and human rights. SGI members have participated in the Parliament of the World's Religions and the World Religions Conference. SGI's representative to the UN in New York is currently president of the Committee of Religious NGOs at the UN.

Source: <http://www.sgi.org>

Title: ***Amida-shu: The Buddhist House***

Address: 12 Coventry Road  
Narborough LE19 2GR  
UK

Phone: 0116.2867476

Web: <http://www.amidatrust.com>

Description: Amida-shu is a Pureland Buddhist church sponsored by the Amida Trust, a religious charity registered in England. The main religious house of Amida-shu is in Narborough near Leicestershire in England. We participate fully in Leicester Council of Faiths and in the Leicester Faith Leaders Forum. We sponsor an inter-faith community chaplaincy service in Leicester using premises supplied by the Methodist church and utilizing Buddhist, Christian and Moslem volunteers. It offers drop-in, counselling and groupwork. We also offer chaplaincy in universities, hospitals and secure facilities to whoever requests, irrespective of faith.

We also sponsor a literacy project in Delhi India which we staff with volunteers, some Buddhist, some secular, rarely from our own denomination. The Delhi project is a Buddhist inter-denominational partnership between Amida Trust (Pureland) and Universal Maitri Foundation (Theravada). It caters, however, for Hindu, Moslem and Buddhist young people and seeks to cultivate an ethos of mutual respect and service to others. Our role is both to remember, praise, and take refuge in Buddha and also to train individuals in ministry.

Our ministry training programme involves much learning from situations where we come in contact with a great diversity of people. We often find that we have just as much to learn from people of other faiths as from other Buddhists. We think that we also have something special to offer. Some of our workers have also learnt from working in our project in Zambia and getting to know the witch doctors as well as the various Christian clergy. Fundamentally, however, one learns faith from a deeper encounter with the human condition, especially in those places where we work with people undergoing all manner of sufferings - whether it is urban alienation in UK, disease and poverty in Africa, illiteracy and poverty in

India, or the problems faced by refugees with whom we are also much involved.

Amida Pureland Buddhism is a universalist spirituality. We worship Amida Buddha. We believe that the grace of Amida Buddha is the sponsoring force behind all religions. There are many different Buddhas who have given rise to many religious traditions. Buddha's teaching describes the universal features of the human condition. All Buddhists should work for peace, kindness, community, hospitality and friendship. Our doctrine includes the "bombu paradigm" about which we published an article in Interreligious Insight magazine. Bombu means that we are all fallible. We believe that even if religions point toward something perfect and ultimate, all actual religions are human and so imperfect and fallible and so all have something to learn from others. This bombu paradigm gives us a basis for friendship and cuts away ideas of exclusiveness.

As a minority (Amida Pureland) within a minority (Buddhism) in UK, and as a group based in the most, size for size, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural city in UK, we have many friends in other faith communities and we feel enriched by this experience.

Source: Provided by Dharmavidya

Title: ***Chakaria Buddhist Foundation***

Address: S.I.Tower 5th Floor  
Asian Housing Society  
SholakBahar, Panchlaish  
Chittagong,  
Bangladesh.

Phone: 0088-31-655587

Description: Chakaria Buddhist Foundation is a socio-economic & cultural organization organized by Buddhist. It has established in 2004. About 400,000 people from Islam, Christian, and Hindu & Buddhist live in this locality. About 85% people are poor, farmers & day laborers. Chakaria Buddhist Foundation are working for the development of Children education from all communities. Already Chakaria Buddhist Foundation has completed the following activities:

Actually the Chakaria Buddhist Foundation arrange several discussion & meeting to make awareness aptitude, gratitude, kindness, patience to establish harmonious relationship with all kinds of communities. Attending in the meeting, the leaders from all religious exchange their views and opinions. As a result the relationship with all people increases and there is no any misunderstanding with others.

Scholarship has been given (2005-2006) to the poor and meritorious students from all communities, which pictures are enclosed

here with. Thus the students feel encouraged and the guardian is also feeling encouraged to teach their child.

The Chakaria Buddhist Foundation arrange annual cultural program. All communities' people participate in this program. The winners are awarded. So the relationship with all communities becomes strong.

We the leaders, members, family participate in other religions program with cordial cooperation and exchange our opinion. Besides this we also attend other religious festival and wedding ceremony to make the smooth relationship. They also participate in our religious program.

Indeed Buddhism based on welfare of human beings. Buddhists are not belief in false and unlawful. So there is no existence of superscription and narroness. Buddhists are patience by birth. So there is no any problem to deal with all religious people. The Buddhist in Bangladesh is so few (about 0.3%) for why there are some unavoidable problems occur but we try to solve it by discussing with cordial. Whatsoever, for these social dealing we have made strong and smooth relationship with all communities' people.

Involving with Chakaria Buddhist Foundation and dealing with several types of people from all communities, I became able to realized that every man is belong to the character of great virtue and this virtue explore in different situation in different environment. Though we some are Buddhist, some are Islam, some are Christian, Some are Hindu and so on. But we are working as a one soul and mind in different social and cultural occasion. From the Buddha's doctrine we know that we are men. So we need to do work for other to bring peach and to make harmonious and indispensable relationship with all. With this belief we are working with every religious people.

Source: Provided by Manik Barua, Organizing Secretary of Chakaria Buddhist Foundation

Title: ***Museum of World Religions***

Address: 6F., No.236, Sec. 1, Jungshan Rd.  
Yonghe, Taipei County 234  
Taiwan R.O.C.

Description: Ven. Dharma Master Hsin Tao is the Abbot of Wu-Sheng Monastery, Ling-Jiou Mountain, Taiwan and Founder of the Museum of World Religions and the Global Family for Love and Peace. He writes: I was born in a very poor village near the Burmese border, and due to the non-stop war and turbulence at that time I lost all of my family when I was very young.

This is why, from this very early time of being all by myself, I had a wish in my heart, namely the hope that war and poverty could be eliminated, the hope that universe could always be in peace, the hope that the world could live in peace.

In order to realize this wish, I chose the path of religious practice and lived in strict ascetic seclusion. Then I united with friends who followed the same aspiration and spiritual path, and together we established the Ling-Jiou Mountain Buddhist Society, based on the motto “Respect, Tolerance and Love”, in order to take concrete steps to transform wars and conflicts, eliminate poverty, protect the environment. What the experience of working actively towards these goals teaches us is that there needs to be a “Globe of love, and a globe of peace”. There can only be peace in the world, when the globe is at peace, and the globe can only be healthy if people’s hearts and minds are harmonious.

I would now like to share with you some of the activities and experiences of the Ling-Jiou Mountain Buddhist society over the past 20 years.

The creation of the Museum of World Religions: Why did we want to build a museum of World Religions? Simply because the basis of religion is love and peace. The Museum wants to let everyone in this world learn about and spread the spirituality of “love and peace”. The motto of the museum is “Respect for every faith, Care for every culture, Love for every Life”, and its mission is to establish a “Global Family of Love and Peace” together. In the past years, the spiritual platform of the Museum of World Religions has made it possible to bring religions together, to let them interact and cooperate with each other. Some concrete programs and activities are Inter-religious dialogue, and cooperation in disaster relief. Also, our Ngo “Global Family for Love and Peace” was established in 2001 ([www.gflp.org](http://www.gflp.org)) , and has recently become UN affiliated. It sponsors the yearly Week of Global Interfaith dialogue and other activities, as described below.

Interreligious Dialogue: Between 2002 and 2006 we have held 7 conferences on Buddhist-Muslim dialogue in various parts of the world. These conferences have brought together religious leaders, academic scholars, groups of young people and people from society. Our hope behind this initiative to propagate a inter-religious dialogue between the major religious traditions of the world is to transform misunderstandings, eliminate prejudice and advance love and peace as common denominator.

In 2004, we also hosted a conference in cooperation with the Goldin Institute and the Taipei City government on the topic of “Water resources” at the Museum. During this conference, we discussed concrete steps how to protect our natural resources.

Also, during a conference in cooperation with the Jerusalem based Elijah Interfaith Institute at our Monastery in 2005, we discussed the influences of globalization and technological developments on our religions, the manifold crises caused by them, but also the opportunities which they offer.

Religion and Disaster Relief: The South Asian Tsunami which occurred on Dec. 26 of 2004 made a 100.00 people lose their lives, and



made 1 million lose their homes. We immediately started to unite religious groups both within and without the country to work together for disaster relief. This found a very big response. Together with the Catholic Church, the Protestant church, Islam, Taoism, Bahai, Buddhism, T'ien-ti Teaching and I-Kuan Tao (Taiwanese religions) we established an organization called "United Action of the Religious World for Disaster Relief in South Asia", and we were able to build four hundred houses in Sri Lanka for the victims of the flood.

The experience of working together made us deeply realize the selflessness, the harmony and mutual trust that members of every religion showed in our common effort of raising funds and working for the disaster relief. This was really the most concrete and tangible expression of the ideal of the "global family for love and peace."

Source: Ven. Dharma Master Hsin Tao, Abbot of Wu-Sheng Monastery, Ling-Jiou Mountain, Taiwan, Founder of the Museum of World Religions and the Global Family for Love and Peace.

Title: ***Followers of Minh Ly Dao***

Address: 4208 California Ave  
Norco, CA. 92860, USA  
Phone: 1-951-735-6622  
and

Tam Tong Mieu (Three-Religion Temple)  
82 Cao Thang, Q 3  
Ho Chi Minh City  
Viet Nam

Phone: 011-84-8-835-8181

Description: Our religious denomination joins other Buddhist and Caodaist communities and government agencies in Vietnam to work in different areas of social concerns, such as: Supporting various centers for the orphans, the elderly, the disabled, the mentally ill; Supporting free medical clinics; Providing food and housing for poor families; Providing scholarships for disadvantaged students; Funding open-heart surgeries for disadvantaged heart patients; Providing relief for victims of natural disasters, typhoons and floods.

We periodically join other communities of the Great Way, Buddhist and Muslim communities in religious observances and celebrations, inter-denominational religious classes and discussions, English and Classical Chinese courses, meditation sessions and retreats.

We are followers of Minh Ly Dao (The Way of Enlightening the Reason), a spiritualist, and syncretistic religion founded in Vietnam, in 1924, by God and the Holy Spirits for a new era of spirituality and lasting peace on Earth. The guiding principles of Minh Ly Dao are: Equality, Cooperation, and Harmony. Therefore, in the spirit of equality and mutual

respect, we felt compelled to cooperate with other religious traditions in addressing all theological, religious and social issues in order to promote love, peace and harmony among all people of the world, and to follow in the footsteps of founders of religions, who taught us the way to achieve self-liberation, wisdom, and union with the Universal Mind or Supreme Being through esoteric practices.

The coming Christ Who is also Maitreya Buddha will preside at the Grand Assembly of the Dragons and Flowers as prophesied in Buddhism, Caodaism and Minh Ly Dao. This Grand Assembly corresponds to the Day of Resurrection or the Day of Judgment prophesied in the Bible and in the Qur'an. The Parliament of the World's Religions will certainly be a part of that Grand Assembly in the near future. All of us should be prepared for this great historical event.

In California, I participated in interreligious group discussions and celebrations with the Rev. Jeffrey Utter at the United Religions Initiative Movements and the Rev. Leland P. Stewart at the Unity-and-Diversity World Council. Followers of Minh Ly Dao were instructed by the Holy Spirits to attend the 2004 Parliament of the World's Religions in Barcelona, at which we presented a paper: "A Scientific Approach to the Harmonization of Religious Traditions." I was encouraged and surprised to meet many religious leaders in the West who are as tolerant towards other faiths as those with Eastern religious backgrounds, in pursuit of universal love, justice, harmony, and peace. To me, this is proof that the prophecies we received from the Holy Spirits through seances have come true: God has sent many bodhisattvas, immortals and saints to all regions of the world in order to prepare humanity for the coming of the Saviour of the world. During this period of Universal Salvation, the Supreme Being and the Holy Spirits have been guiding humanity in order to save the world from total destruction and to show people the path of salvation through self-cultivation with meditation practices.

Source: Provided by Hung Ly Lam, follower of Minh Ly Dao

Title: ***Dhyankuti Buddhist Monastery***

Address: GPO Box 8973, NPC 571  
New Baneshwor  
Kathmandu  
Nepal

Phone: 977-1-2210468, 011-661244

Contact: mcenter@ntc.net.np or mettacenter@yahoo.com

Description: Dhyankuti Buddhist Monastery is a Buddhist Organization focusing on the overall development of a person without any discrimination of the caste, creed or religion.

This organization was established in 1976, in order to promote humanistic Buddhist activities, to conduct seminars, to carry out spiritual

activities, to conduct community development program and most importantly organizing inter-religious activities, events and seminars to promote peace and harmony among the multi-religious local communities.

For the past 3 decades Dhaynkuti Buddhist Monastery has organized many inter-religious events, workshops, dialogue, consultation meeting with different faiths such as Hindu, Christian, Islam and Brahma Kumari.

In 2003, we had an inter-religious youth service project was held in this premises attended by 35 youths representing all the faiths from local and international participants. During this 12 days project, all the participants learnt each other's faiths by living together, eating together and working together. We built a model inter-religious school for the conflict victim and orphan children home. Name of this school is Metta Center, it means (Center of Compassion for All)

During the project we also arranged the inter-religious historical sites visit where by all the faith got first time experience visiting Buddhist monastery by all other religious people and vice versa to Mosque...to Church .Hindu Temple and synagogue. They learn the cross boundaries and each religions.

Metta Center children home provides the common platform for the multi religious children from different parts of Nepal receiving education for free. Meanwhile, we create the common platform for the open dialogue among all the major faith and work for the peaceful co-existence in this plural world.

We work in Buddhist environment throughout Nepal while inviting all other religious leaders, communities and followers to our programs, while attending their programs vice a versa.

With this regular inter-religious events we had first had experience in other faith. culture and tradition. When we learnt that there is so much to learn and share from each, we feel very positive on others building friendly relationship with different religious communities. We learn on peace, compassion, harmony, brotherhood and many other good teachings to be learn from each other and develop ourselves.

Source: Provided by Mr. Piya Ratna Maharjan, President, Metta Center

Title: ***The Buddhist Council of New South Wales***

Address: PO Box 593  
Crows Nest, NSW 1585  
Australia

Phone: +61 +2 9966 8893

Contact: [office@buddhistcouncil.org](mailto:office@buddhistcouncil.org)

Web: <http://www.buddhistcouncil.org>

Description: The Council's aim is to support our member organizations who in turn serve the Buddhist community; to represent the Buddhist community

to inter-faith groups, media, government and the NSW public, in accordance with the Dharma; and to promote the understanding and practice of the Dharma. The Council attends many interfaith activities with Christian, Jewish, Bahai, Moslem, and many other faiths, and is planning a Buddhist Expo next January, to which the Council will invite representatives of many faiths.

Source: Provided by Sujata Lim, Office Manager

Title: ***Buddhistische Akademie***

Address: Ceciliengärten 29  
12159 Berlin,  
Germany

Phone: (030) 79 41 09 59

Contact: office@buddhistische-akademie-bb.de

Web: <http://www.buddhist-academy.de>  
<http://www.buddhistische-akademie.de>

Description: Founded in 2000, the Academy is creating a network of and for people who transmit, study and practice Buddhism within the context of European culture. The Academy's principles include an ethical and compassionate attitude, openness for the various traditions of Buddhism, scientific methods, the reflection of cultural values and creativity with respect to teaching and learning styles. And the Academy has interreligious dialogue with the Catholic Academy in Berlin with four events each year.

Source: <http://www.buddhist-academy.de>

Title: ***Buddhist Peace Fellowship***

Address: PO Box 3470  
Berkeley, CA 94703  
USA

Phone: 510.655.6169

Contact: earthlyn@bpf.org (Earthlyn Manuel, Executive Director)

Web: <http://www.bpf.org>

Description: The mission of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF), founded in 1978, is to serve as a catalyst for socially engaged Buddhism. Our purpose is to help beings liberate themselves from the suffering that manifests in individuals, relationships, institutions, and social systems. BPF's programs, publications, and practice groups link Buddhist teachings of wisdom and compassion with progressive social change. Throughout the year, we collaborated with other organizations and coalitions like the American Friends Service Committee, United for Peace and Justice, and the Network of Spiritual Progressives. Our main concerns included the war in Iraq, nuclear disarmament, and human rights violations (especially

torture). We also recognized economic justice as a necessary ingredient for peace. In partnership with Interfaith Workers Justice (IWJ), BPF member Mushim Ikeda-Nash authored a “Call to Action for American Buddhists,” which appeared in IWJ’s annual Labor Day Packet.

Source: <http://www.bpf.org>

Title: ***San Francisco Zen Center***

Address: 300 Page Street  
San Francisco CA 94102  
USA

Phone: (415) 863-3136

Contact: [ccoffice@sfzc.org](mailto:ccoffice@sfzc.org)

Web: <http://www.sfzc.org>

Description: The purpose of San Francisco Zen Center is to make accessible and embody the wisdom and compassion of the Buddha as expressed in the Soto Zen tradition established by Dogen Zenji in 13th-century Japan and conveyed to us by Suzuki Roshi and other Buddhist teachers. The Center collaborates with other religious organizations in creating events and activities that further our common goals; develops and maintains relationships with other individual and Buddhist organizations so that we support each other in practicing and teaching socially engaged Buddhism; responds to requests from intrafaith and interfaith organizations to participate in activities; promote interfaith study and dialogue

Source: <http://www.sfzc.org>

Title: ***The Office of Tibet in New York***

Address: 241 East 32nd Street  
New York, NY 10016  
USA

Phone: (212) 213-5010

Contact: [otny@igc.org](mailto:otny@igc.org)

Web: <http://www.tibetoffice.org>

Description: The Office of Tibet in New York is the official agency of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, based in Dharamsala, India. Over the years, its responsibilities have increased to include the following major activities: Looking after the welfare of 12,000 Tibetans living in the US and Canada and supporting their efforts to pass down the knowledge of Tibetan language and culture to the younger generation; Coordinating and preparing visits of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Americas; Raising awareness of the plight of Tibet in the United States, Canada and Latin American countries in order to mobilize the support of governments and peoples of these countries for a peaceful and negotiated solution to the Tibetan issue; Providing information and

guidance on specific requests to Americans, Canadians and Latin Americans wishing to study the Tibetan culture or to visit Tibetan exile communities in India and Nepal.

Source: <http://www.tibetoffice.org>

Title: ***The Los Angeles Buddhist-Catholic Dialogue***

Address: 928 S. New Hampshire Ave  
Los Angeles, CA 90006

Contact: [FrARSmith@la-archdiocese.org](mailto:FrARSmith@la-archdiocese.org), [kerzema@lavc.edu](mailto:kerzema@lavc.edu)

Web: <http://www.urbandharma.org/>

Description: The Los Angeles Buddhist-Catholic Dialogue is sponsored by the Buddhist Sangha council and the Catholic Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. It was formed as an official, on-going, core group dialogue. Meetings are held every six to eight weeks, rotating between Buddhist and Catholic locations.

Source: <http://www.urbandharma.org/bcdialog/page2.html>

Title: ***The Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies***

Address: Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies  
c/o CSSR Executive Office  
Rice University MS 156  
P.O. Box 1892  
Houston, TX 77251-1892

Contact: 713-348-5721

Web: <http://www.society-buddhist-christian-studies.org/>

Description: To serve as a coordinating body supporting activities related to the comparative study of, and the practical interaction between, Buddhism and Christianity, whether by groups or individuals.

Whenever possible, to encourage those who report on Buddhist-Christian dialogue and comparative study, both as historical research and contemporary practice, to employ analytical and theoretical tools and set their discussion within the framework of our larger human history.

To be as inclusive as is feasible in all such aforementioned activities, seeking a balance with regard to geography, ethnicity, age, sex, denomination or lineage, cultural tradition, and leadership in both academic and religious institutions and in the public and the private sectors.

Source: <http://www.society-buddhist-christian-studies.org/purpose.html>

## Christian

### Anglican

Title: ***The Interfaith Education Initiative***

Address: 815 Second Avenue  
New York, NY 10017

Phone: (212) 716-6276

Web: <http://ecusa.anglican.org>

Description: The Interfaith Education Initiative (IEI) was established in response to the tragedy of September 11, 2001, and the resulting fear, anger and suspicion that followed. Events during the weeks following revealed how misinformed many Americans were about the beliefs and practices of their neighbors' religions and cultures. IEI was created to promote the awareness of Episcopalians to religious plurality in the United States, to improve relations and to establish dialogue with people of other faiths.

“Sponsors of the interfaith education initiative: The Interfaith Education Initiative began as a joint project of Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) and the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (OEIR). ERD believes that awareness of the larger world - its diversity and complexity - is critical for a Church engaged in, and committed to mission of global peace and reconciliation. The OEIR works toward the visible unity of the whole Christian fellowship in the faith and truth of Jesus Christ, developing and sharing in its various dialogues and toward the fullness of unity for which our Savior prayed.

What is the religious significance of the interfaith education initiative?

As witnesses to Christ's love, we approach interfaith relations and dialogue in commitment to our faith. At the heart of Christian belief is

faith in the triune God. We affirm that God is creator and sustainer of all creation. We have been called to witness in the world to God's healing and reconciling work in Christ. We do this humbly, acknowledging that we are not fully aware of the ways in which God's redeeming work will be brought to its completion. We now see, only dimly, as in a mirror, for we now know only in part and do not have the full knowledge of what God has in store for us (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12-13).

In dialogue and relationships with people of other faiths, we have come to recognize that the mystery of God's salvation is not exhausted by our theological affirmations. Salvation belongs to God: We therefore dare not stand in judgment of others. While witnessing to our own faith, we seek to understand the way in which God intends to bring God's purposes to their fulfillment. We therefore feel able to assure our partners in dialogue that we are sincere and open in our wish to walk together towards the fullness of truth. We therefore claim this hope with confidence, always prepared to give reason for it, as we struggle and work together with others in a world torn apart by rivalries and wars, social disparities and economic injustices.\*

Therefore, interfaith education is necessary to understand the significance of our neighbors as a praying and believing people with spiritual histories of their own, and to understand the meaning of being a Christian. Within this context, what can we make of the experience of God to which other religions bear witness, and how does this understanding relate to our own experience of God in Christ? Interfaith education is, thus, a learning process and also a journey into deeper explorations of our own faiths.

The interfaith education initiative's mandate is: To focus on education and dialogue between representatives of the Abrahamic faiths (Christianity, Islam and Judaism) in the United States. To make available to the Episcopal Church experts and facilitators to work at interfaith dialogue at the local level. To strengthen networks working in interfaith education and relations so that the Episcopal Church has strong and effective channels through which to conduct interfaith work. To make the Episcopal Church aware of the resources available to engage in effective interfaith dialogue. To work with other communions, the National Council of Churches in Christ, and the World Council of Churches to share best practices for doing interfaith dialogue. To provide a "resource bag" of interfaith materials for individuals and networks within the Episcopal Church. To raise awareness of interfaith issues at the seminaries of the Episcopal Church.'

Source: [http://ecusa.anglican.org/71796\\_ENG\\_HTM.htm](http://ecusa.anglican.org/71796_ENG_HTM.htm)

Title: ***Anglican Participation in Religions for Peace (UK)***  
Address: London Inter Faith Centre



125 Salusbury Road  
London, UK

Web: [www.religionsforpeace.org.uk](http://www.religionsforpeace.org.uk)

Description: Our memorable visit to Kyoto and Nagasaki, Japan, last August, for the 8th World Assembly of the Religions for Peace Network allowed me, as a Christian, to share with over 2,000 religious leaders from all the world's great religions, women of faiths, and young spiritual travellers, a vision of 'different religions: common action'. There, we explored peaceful ways of securing shared security in our trouble world and I returned home inspired to act during the next five years: transforming conflict; building peace and advancing sustainable development. So, what are we doing in the UK?

First, following the London Bombings, Her Majesty's Government is funding our inter faith activity, working with communities of faiths in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and those communities with the highest percentage of black and minority ethnic communities to develop social cohesion and shared citizenship. These communities include Leeds, home to the London bombers, where mistrust and fear are being overcome through people of faith coming together to share. There, we are supporting a Sikh initiative for a multi faith reflection upon 800 years of urban history. The London boroughs of Newham, Tower Hamlets, Greenwich, Waltham Forest and Hackney, where the 2012 Olympics are already providing real opportunities for faiths to build together upon the spirit and values of fair play, peace and friendship, are also developing opportunities, through community work and sport. People included are of every faith: Anglicans to Zoroastrians; including those with roots in every continent; young, not so young and the elderly; female and male; and of every ability and disability.

Second, we are active members of the UK Consortium on AIDS and International Development, which includes over 80 Non-Governmental Organisations, such as CARE International; Oxfam; Save the Children (UK); UNICEF, Womankind Worldwide; World Vision and Youth Against AIDS. Two years ago, our joint advocacy with HM Government's Department of International Development (DfID) succeeded in securing the first UK funding specifically for Orphans affected by AIDS. US\$300 Million over 3 years may not be enough, but it is a start and our Consortium is now monitoring the effectiveness of this initiative to help our government decide where to place such funding in the future. The Consortium is also working to persuade HM Government that religious communities and Faith Based Organisations have a more significant role to play in delivering the benefits of funding directly to local communities.

A new initiative of our Consortium is the AIDSPortal , which provides free and open access, via the internet, to knowledge and experience on HIV/AIDS and International Development. From your own

home or office, you can access our Network's Scaling up effective partnerships: A guide to working with faith-based organisations in the response to HIV and AIDS, along with 2,000 other documents on 'best practice', including Faith in Action: Working towards the Millennium Goals. This is an Action Toolkit for Religious Leaders and Communities from the Religions for Peace partnership with the UN Millennium Campaign. The AIDSPortal, launched only last autumn, involves 900 organisations worldwide, provides 1,000 web-links; gives access to and networking with over 1,300 practitioners in AIDS and International Development; and lists 210 current events. The AIDSPortal is proving to be a powerful tool. Imagine what a 'PeacePortal' might do for peace!

Third, we have two international partnerships. First, the UK Chapter is working in partnership with religious leaders in Albania, where Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic and Bektashi leaders are working together to build their Inter Religious Council for the benefit of all their delightful people. Last September, these leaders came to London to learn about our inter faith work and, more importantly, have the time and space to develop their own partnership. A few weeks ago, accompanied by my wife, Elaine, I was welcomed in Albania to witness the four most senior religious leaders affirm very publicly their commitment to working together. We also have a concord with the Inter Religious Council of Sierra Leone, West Africa, where their warm people: Muslims; Christians and those of traditional African religions, are working together to bring about reconciliation, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims and perpetrators (including child soldiers) of their decade of Rebel War that destroyed their country. Our partnership is exploring ways of working together to learn and to build sustainable peace. This month we are delighted to have secured the first funding specifically for the start-up of this peace partnership.

My personal inspiration comes from experience of the people of faiths in post-war Sierra Leone and is founded upon texts from the Holy Bible, such as: "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill', and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." (James 2:14-17)

Each day, I am surprised by new perspectives from working with people of different faiths. These perspectives challenge, yet strengthen, my own faith, whilst confirming the Qur'anic truth that

"...if Allāh had pleased He would have made you a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you, therefore strive with one another to hasten to virtuous deeds..." (Surah 5. 48)

Maybe Jesuit priest, Teilhard de Chardin's *pensée* best sums up my enthusiasm for multi faith action: "In the depths of the human multitude,

there slumbers an immense spiritual power which will manifest itself only when we have learnt how to break through the dividing walls of our egoism and raise ourselves up to an entirely new perspective, so that habitually and in a practical fashion we fix our gaze on the universal realities.”

May all people of faith one day share the enrichment of working in multi faith cooperation on the realities of our troubled world.

Source: Provided by Dr Brian Walker, Director, Religions for Peace (UK)

Title: ***Alexandria Process***

Address: N/A

Phone: N/A

Web: <http://nifcon.anglicancommunion.org/index.cfm>

Description: “The Network for Inter Faith Concerns (NIFCON) of the Anglican Communion exists to encourage: Progress towards genuinely open and loving relationships between Christians and people of other faiths. Exchange of news, information, ideas and resources relating to inter faith concerns between provinces of the Anglican Communion. Sensitive witness and evangelism where appropriate. Prayerful and urgent action with all involved in tension and conflict. Local contextual and wider theological reflection.

NIFCON does this by: Networking and meeting; The written word in its various forms; Gathering information through its international presidents, correspondents, and contacts support groups.”

A three-day summit in Alexandria, Egypt in January 2002 between senior Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders resulted in the First Alexandria Declaration of the Religious Leaders of the Holy Land, which condemned violence and pledged to work for peace. A Permanent Committee for the Implementation of the Alexandria Declaration (PCIAD) was established from the signatories and other spiritual leaders and has since met regularly.

Source: <http://nifcon.anglicancommunion.org/work/dialogues/index.cfm>

Title: ***The Christian Muslim Digest***

Address: N/A

Phone: N/A

Web: <http://nifcon.anglicancommunion.org/index.cfm>

Description: This service hopes to offer a digest of information from English speaking newspapers and broadcast services in the main countries or areas where Anglicans and Muslims regularly encounter one another. It seeks to provide factual coverage of stories involving Anglicans and Muslims in a way that shows a) what is happening in relations, and b) how the stories are handled in the media. In addition to this, we will occasionally provide a detailed report about a particular area, adding to factual coverage some

analysis and opinions from as wide and authoritative a selection of commentators as possible.

Source: <http://nifcon.anglicancommunion.org/digest/index.cfm>

Title: ***The Arts Within Religion***

Address: N/A

Contact: N/A

Cooperation between CBS and the church

Description: “[Episcopal News Service] A weekly arts program that is part of the ministry of Episcopal Church of Holy Apostles in New York City will be featured on "The Arts Within Religion," an upcoming CBS Television interfaith religion special.

The program will be released April 22 to television affiliates across the nation as part of the network's quarterly Religion and Culture series. The program is produced by CBS in cooperation with Interfaith Broadcasting Commission, whose members include the National Council of Churches USA (NCCUSA), the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Islamic Society of North America, the Union for Reform Judaism, and the New York Board of Rabbis...

The CBS program will feature the program's founder, Marion Williams, who shepherds the group from week to week. She is an artist and a student at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

"It's God working through the person, through their own creative energy," says Williams. "Despite the external circumstances, they still have that spiritual core. And art can help to open the door to that and channel it into something constructive for their lives."

"I think it's so appropriate that Holy Apostles' is being featured in this television special," said Bishop Christopher Epting, the Presiding Bishop's Deputy for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. "They are a shining example of the Episcopal Church's primary commitment to mission, fueled by their own passion for liturgy and the arts. This is part of what we bring to the ecumenical and interfaith communities."

Source: [http://www.episcopalchurch.org/79901\\_84902\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/79901_84902_ENG_HTML.htm)

Title: ***Individual Participation***

Address: N/A

Contact: N/A

Description: The Rev Dr Marcus Braybrooke, an Anglican priest, has been involved in interfaith work for over forty years. He is President of the World Congress of Faiths, Co-Founder of the Three Faiths Forum and a Patron of the International Interfaith Centre. He writes, “‘Dialogue’ and ‘interfaith’ are today the ‘in-words.’ It was a very different picture seventy years ago when the World Congress of Faiths met for the first

time in London in July 1936. The Archbishop advised King Edward VIII not to preside because this might compromise Christianity. In fact few religious leaders attended, but many eminent scholars did, including Dr Radhakrishnan, later President of India, Dr Yusuf Ali, translator of the standard English version of the Qur'an, and Dr T Suzuki, whose books on Zen Buddhism were widely read in the West. Indeed the academic study of 'comparative religion' as it was then called help to prepare the way for interfaith dialogue.

The moving spirit of the Congress was Sir Francis Younghusband, who was an explorer of both the physical and the spiritual world. He was one of the first Europeans to cross the Gobi desert. In 1903 Younghusband, as an officer of the British Empire, led a – still controversial – mission to Lhasa. The day after signing a treaty with the Tibetans he went off by himself to the mountains. He was elated by the good will of his former foes. The, he wrote later, 'elation grew to exultation...I felt in touch with the flaming heart of the world... A mighty joy-giving Power was at work in the world... Never again could I think evil. Never again could I bear enmity.'

Younghusband, in convening the World Congress of Faiths, did not dwell on this experience. Our shared humanity, the enrichment of getting to know our neighbours of faiths other than our own, and the moral values held in common were reason enough to encourage a 'fellowship of faiths.' Yet many of those who have played a leading role in the World Congress of Faiths have been inspired by a spiritual experience of 'Oneness.'

The threat and then the horrific reality of a World War, the death of Younghusband and a theological climate, which was hostile to dialogue, reduced WCF in the fifties and sixties to a small and rather isolated organisation. By the because of immigration, Muslim, Sikh and Hindus communities were growing. The theological mood, also, was changing, and in the schools, 'scripture lessons' were being replaced by 'RE' - religious education - which included some study of world religions.

The major break through was in 1987, when the faith communities in Britain founded the Inter Faith Network for the UK, with the aim of developing 'good relations between people of different faiths in this country.' It is important to stress that the Inter Faith Network, which is supported by religious leaders, is a network of organisations. By contrast WCF is still a membership organisation for interested individuals.

In the 1980s, WCF convened a meeting for international interfaith organisations, which agreed, jointly to mark the centenary of the World Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893. Interfaith events in 1993, especially the major gathering in Chicago 1993, brought the interfaith movement to public attention.

To ensure that this momentum was not lost, the International Interfaith Centre (IIC) was set up in Oxford and now co-ordinates the

International Interfaith Organisations Network (IION), which has some fourteen members. ....”

“.... WCF has not become the world organization that Younghusband envisaged, but it has helped to stimulate the growth of ‘the interfaith movement’, which is now world wide. It co-sponsors the journal *Interreligious Insight*. WCF offers an opportunity for individual believers – not just religious leaders – to participate in this movement. It still has a pioneering role in encouraging not just understanding of other faiths, but mutual learning from them in the search for truth and in spiritual practice.

There are many reasons why people of different religions are meeting and working together. If, however, interfaith activity becomes just a branch of ‘religious community relations’ or is used by Governments and is not deeply rooted in the Spirit, I fear that the moderates in all religions may not be strong enough to withstand the extremists and, God forbid, further terrorist attacks.

The only secure basis for the affirmation of the sacredness of all human life is the belief that every person is a child of the One God. Indeed as Mahatma Gandhi said, ‘The only way to find God is to see him in his creation and to be one with it. This can only be done by the service of all.’”

Source: Provided by the Rev Dr Marcus Braybrooke.

Title: ***Interfaith Refugee Ministry***

Address: 235 Nicoll Street  
New Haven, CT 06511

Phone: 203-562-2095

Web: <http://www.interfaithrefugee.org>

Description: Interfaith Refugee Ministry (IRM) began as the refugee resettlement arm of Episcopal Social Service, Inc., welcoming its first family in 1982. In the 25 years of its existence, IRM has resettled over 4,000 people. Last year IRM welcomed 112 refugees from 19 countries. Nearly one half came from Africa.

IRM is a program of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut and is the local affiliate of Episcopal Migration Ministries and the Immigration and Refugee Program of Church World Service. IRM also receives funding from the Connecticut Department of Social Services, private foundations, faith communities, and individual donors.

Activities:

Resettlement: Services include provision of housing, food, and other material needs. In addition, IRM assists refugees in obtaining social security cards and medical examinations, enrolls children in school, provides community and cultural orientation and guides refugees in negotiating the many institutions with which they will come into contact.

**Job Assistance:** Refugees are authorized to work immediately upon arrival. Since the IRM program is designed to foster early self-sufficiency, employment is a milestone in the resettlement process. IRM works hard to promote our refugees to area employers and works equally hard to prepare clients for entry-level employment. Last year, the average wage earned by our clients was \$8.41 an hour — well above Connecticut's minimum wage of \$7.10. More than half of jobs obtained for refugees offered medical benefits.

**Case Management and Support Services:** IRM provides referral, translation, transportation, crisis intervention, and counseling services. These services are available to refugees resettled by IRM, refugees who have moved to Connecticut from other states, and asylees resident in the state.

**Education:** Many school-aged refugee children have never entered a classroom before coming to the US. As a result, these newcomers encounter a host of obstacles to achieving academic success. IRM works to remove barriers by providing children with intensive in-school and after-school tutoring assistance, as well as a summer school program. IRM also holds classes for parents to equip them to become active participants in their children's education.

**Church Sponsorship Development:** As a church-based resettlement agency, IRM looks to faith communities to partner with us in our ministry. IRM trains faith communities in the requirements of sponsorship and guides them as they move through the process. Churches that are unable to undertake a full sponsorship are encouraged to assist where they can. Some churches, for example, choose to furnish an apartment and welcome the new family on arrival. Others have contributed money towards refugees' support.

**Volunteer Recruitment and Training:** IRM recruits volunteers from area universities and the community at large to help new arrivals. Volunteers assist refugees by providing transportation to appointments, serving as translators and English language tutors, and most importantly, by providing companionship to new arrivals. Volunteers are an integral part of our program.

Source: <http://www.interfaithrefugee.org/services.html>

Title: ***'Family Values in the 21st Century: Christian and Muslim perspectives'***

Address: N/A

Contact: N/A

Description: "A major conference was held in October on the theme; 'Family Values in the 21st Century: Christian and Muslim perspectives'. The Anglican-Muslim Group (of which LCM is a member) under the banner of 'Building Bridges' hosted this event. This was the fourth such conference

hosted by the Anglican-Muslim Group, a manifest indication of their continued and growing relationship, and a determined focused approach to make Faith perspectives a major constituent of public debate and issues of common concern”

Source: [http://www.lancashiremosques.com/projects\\_details.asp?ID=7](http://www.lancashiremosques.com/projects_details.asp?ID=7)

Title: ***Three Faiths Forum***

Address: Star House  
104 Grafton Road  
London NW5 4BA  
UK

Contact: 0207 485 2538, Fax: 0207 485 4512

Sidney@threefaithsforum.org.uk or [Threefaiths@threefaithsforum.org.uk](mailto:Threefaiths@threefaithsforum.org.uk)

Web: <http://www.sternberg-foundation.co.uk>

Description: The aims of the Three Faiths Forum are to encourage friendship, goodwill and understanding amongst people of the three Abrahamic monotheistic faiths in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

To promote support for and public recognition of the importance of groups where people of the Muslim, Christian and Jewish faiths meet and share common interests and experiences.

To encourage respect for religious differences between the three faiths on a basis of equality and exploring and enjoying those differences where appropriate.

To promote training of ministers of religion of the three faiths in their common roots, understanding of their differences and encourage respect for each other on a basis of equality.

The Three Faith Forum would like to express its deep appreciation to our Advisory Board member Anthony Bailey and to Eligo International for preparing and designing this website so that a much wider audience can appreciate the Forum's role and function today.

Source: <http://www.sternberg-foundation.co.uk>

## **Orthodox**

Title: ***Interfaith and Interreligious Theological Consultations***

Address: 5201 Ellsworth Avenue



Pittsburgh, PA 15232  
Contact: 412-621-5529  
Web: <http://pittsburgh.goarch.org/>  
Description: This semiannual Consultation met three times between May 2003 and June 2004 under the co-chairmanship of His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos, Greek Orthodox Bishop of Pittsburgh, and the Most Reverend Daniel Pilarczyk, Archbishop of Cincinnati. Each meeting usually runs for an afternoon, a full day, and a morning and is usually divided into seven sessions: one business; two informational; and four theological. The business sessions draw up plans for the next meeting—time, place and theological subjects to be examined. The informational has various members of the Consultation report briefly on recent developments in each Church. The theological sessions normally involve presentation of pre-assigned papers for discussion.  
Source: <http://www.antiochian.org/Orthodox-Catholic>

Title: ***St. Andrew's Biblical Theological Institute***  
Address: Jerusalem St., 3, Moscow, 109316  
Russia  
Contact: 7 495 6702200  
Web: [www.standrews.ru](http://www.standrews.ru)

Description: “Its primary purpose is to train lay people in theology and religious studies as professors and teachers, catechists, translators, editors, and journalists. It also provides continuing education for ordained clergy. Although St. Andrew's shares cultural and religious roots with the Russian Orthodox Church, it is a totally independent institution, not owned nor financed by either church or state.

The history of St Andrew's started on 8 September 1990 when Fr Alexander Men gave the first lecture in the Sunday Orthodox University which he founded. In 1995 a formal higher educational institution 'St Andrew's Biblical Theological College' was established on the basis of educational programs developed in the University.

St. Andrew's provides the opportunity to study the Bible and theology to everyone who wants this. It has an innovative five-year curriculum in scripture, theology, sacred and secular history, religious pedagogy, literature and art. Its courses are taught by distinguished specialists. St. Andrew's also sponsors summer institutes, seminars, public lectures, academic conferences, and paper contests.”

“By planning a series of publications and other activities our College is primarily pursuing the following goals: to reveal to an interested reader the complexity and diversity of Islamo-Christian dialogue, its existing and emerging forms, to illustrate how much has

already been achieved in this field and how much more remains to be done.

We plan to publish translations of various theological works of different Christian confessions, Muslim authors, specialists in Islamic studies devoted to issues concerning Islamo-Christian dialogue. In the nearest future St Andrew's College hopes to make the issues of Islamo-Christian dialogue and on a broader scale inter-religious dialogue, a permanent subject of its curricula, academic research and publishing plans."

Source: <http://www.standrews.ru/index-ea=1&ln=2&chp=showpage&parent=432&num=392&zi=432>

Title: ***Jewish Study at St. Andrew's Biblical Theological Institute***

Address: Jerusalem St., 3, Moscow, 109316  
Russia

Contact: 7 495 6702200

Web: [www.standrews.ru](http://www.standrews.ru)

Description: "Anti-Semitism is still strong in Russian society and the Russian Orthodox Church. We have several nationalistic newspapers, journals and broadcasting corporations. In Orthodox seminaries and academies students have no courses on Judaism and the problem of anti-Semitism.

St Andrew's College highly values co-operation with Jewish organizations. We have two courses on Judaism (basic and specialized). Among our professors and students there are religious Jews. We co-operate with the Cambridge Center for Jewish-Christian Relations and are going to organize a summer school on this subject. Each year one of our students study at this Center. We collaborate with "Gesharim" publishing house on some publishing projects. We have published a reader on Jewish-Christian dialogue compiled by Helen Fry

Source: <http://www.standrews.ru/index-ea=1&ln=2&chp=showpage&parent=432&num=392&zi=432>

Title: ***The Russian Orthodox Church***

Address: N/A

Contact: N/A

Description: The Russian Orthodox Church contributed to the preparation of the Council of Europe's White Book on intercultural dialogue. "On May 31, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), sent a letter to Ms. Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Council of Europe Coordinator for inter-cultural dialogue, saying, 'Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the White Book of the Council of Europe on intercultural dialogue. I believe the decision to involve religious communities in this

process is absolutely right. The extent to which the interests of religious traditions are taken into account in the final version of the document will determine the future of the entire intercultural dialogue'.

Given below are considerations expressed by the DECR on questions for discussion in preparation of the Council of Europe's White Book on intercultural dialogue. Earlier, Hegumen Philaret Bulekov, Russian Orthodox Church Representative in Strasbourg, offered his considerations and proposals concerning the White Book.

Considerations of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations

How urgent are efforts to promote intercultural dialogue today? Why are they urgent? Promoting intercultural dialogue is a very urgent task. The longer a mechanism of effective dialogue is delayed in setting up, the more apparent the gap between various cultural groups and the greater the probability for their confrontation will become. Of special importance is the dialogue on equal footing between the religious worldview and secularism. The claim to the absolute truth of the secular attitude to social order carries a threat of conflict.

Which is the most promising overall "vision" for living together in multicultural societies, what is the most suitable model for managing its diversity in a democratic way? The notion of multiculturalism in itself is not something new, as the world has always been poly-cultural. It is only in our time however that all the cultures have entered a ensured a certain cultural sovereignty, is actually played out. In this situation, attempts of cultures to exist in isolation neglecting the surrounding lead to a growing potential of contradictions caused by ignorance. Equally dangerous are attempts to present a particular culture as common for all. Equally unsuccessful would be attempts to make the common space culturally neutral and to make religious traditions secular. In this case neutrality would be regarded as equally hostile to all cultures and religions, since cultural and religious traditions are called to define if not all but many spheres in the life of human community, including the models of family, socium and state.

A combination of various cultures within one society poses again the question of the community and foundation of unity of the human race. The question is to be put in exactly this way because a great many of world cultures are represented in many if not all regions as if in miniature. The unification of humankind on bases acceptable to all has no examples in the past. In former empires, just as in many modern states, the common space was always handed over to a particular culture or made neutral with the understanding that the 'neutrality' was only one of the cultures, which was far from being recognized by all. In the Russian Empire, for instance, the cultural peculiarities of its peoples determined a certain diversity of its laws. Some norms were applied only to particular ethnoses or groups without being applied to the common space. At the same time, it is

difficult today to draw a border between ethnoses, while a possibility for their existence in isolation in the modern world is actually null.

Therefore, a real basis needs to be found for coexistence and cooperation of various cultural, legal and social systems. Only recently the pragmatic ties seemed to be sufficient for uniting society. But however important these ties may be, they cannot ensure peace in society, since any instability of the sphere of economy or politics can potentially destroy the socium...”

Source: [http://www.strasbourg-reor.org/modules.php?name=News&new\\_topic=44&file=article&sid=560](http://www.strasbourg-reor.org/modules.php?name=News&new_topic=44&file=article&sid=560))

Title: ***Interfaith Environmental Programs***

Address: 220030, Minsk, av. F. Scoriny, 24.  
Belarus

Phone: +375 (17) 227-36-75, 227-24-36, 227-75-28

Web: <http://www.christeducenr.by/>

Description: A Series of seminars on Christian Ecology together with the Catholic workgroup “Schoepfungsverantwortung” from Vienna (October, 1999; May, 2000), in which the Orthodox and Catholics from Belarus and Austria took part; scientists and also academics and representatives of various ecological NGOs of Belarus.

Source: <http://www.christeducenr.by/english/projects/christproj.html>

Title: ***Conference: "Peace and Tolerance II, Dialogue and Cooperation in Southeast Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia"***

Address: N/A

(Several organizations participated)

Description: “This Conference continued the deliberations on peace and tolerance that began in Berne in 1992 and continued here in 1994. While most of the deadly conflicts that raged then have ceased, unfortunately there is still distrust, suspicion, the threat of harm, as well as intermittent violence in the regions represented. It is our aim, as religious leaders of our countries, to mitigate against those dangerous paths; to heal painful memories; and encourage all to exhibit in their actions the spirit of ‘live and let live’”

Title: ***Ukrainian Orthodox-Jewish Holocaust Remembrance***

Address: N/A  
Canada

(Several organizations were present)

Description: “Suffering creates a bond of understanding and compassion that can have the power to transcend social, national, and religious boundaries. And it was this bond that brought the representatives of the Ukrainian and Jewish communities of Montreal to a joint ceremony - held at St Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church on Sunday, 22 April, 2007 - honouring the victims of the Nazi Holocaust and the Soviet Famine (the Holodomor). For the first time in Canadian history Jews and Ukrainians prayed together for the loss both nations had endured at the hands of genocidal tyrants.

Every year for the last twenty-five years the Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Montreal has been organizing a memorial service for the victims of the Shoah at various Protestant and Catholic churches in the city as part of the permanent international inter-faith dialogue. For most of the pastors, priests, rabbis and invited guests, and members of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Montreal, among them the National Chair of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Dr. Victor Goldbloom, this year’s commemoration was their introduction to the traditions of both Eastern Christianity and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. In his welcoming remarks, the Chair of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Montreal and parish priest of St .Mary the Protectress Church, the Very Rev. Dr. Ihor Kutash, quoting Romans 12:21 set the tone of the event: “‘Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good’... [because] it is not evil but goodness and unity in diversity that has the last word in this world, which belongs to God.”

In the Church Hall seven thick red candles were set out on a long table covered with a crisp, floor-length snow white tablecloth, decorated with one beautifully embroidered runner. To the sound of special prayers read by the Parish Council Secretary, Victor Zwetkow, the candles were lit one by one by the representatives of the Israeli Consulate, Canadian Jewish Congress, Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre and the Embassy of Ukraine.

As dignity-imbued as these moments were, it was the lighting of the sixth candle by the Holocaust Survivor, Yehudi Lindeman, and the lighting of the seventh candle by the Famine Survivor, Anna Melnyk, that caught at people’s hearts. Like in the striking photograph from last September’s memorial service at Babyn Yar in Ukraine, here in Montreal, a Ukrainian and a Jew stood united in remembered pain, united in the need to honour those who died.

In his homily, Dr. Alexander Melnyk, Chair of the Parish Council of St. Mary’s, said: “It is generally assumed, that politics, warfare and economic activities are the subject matter of history. To the prophets, God’s judgement of man’s conduct is the main issue; everything else is marginal. Prophets do not mince words... Isaiah writes (35: 7,8) ‘The envoys of peace weep bitterly, the highways lie waste...witnesses are despised, there is no regard for man’. There is nothing that we forget as

eagerly as the wickedness of man. The earth holds such terrifying secrets. The dead are buried and the crimes, forgotten.”

Yet in the face of war, torture, persecution and genocide it is all too easy to question not only the effectiveness of humanity’s efforts at fighting evil, but to question God’s very existence. However, to question “if not His existence, then His love and care for us” is precisely the goal of evil, maintained Dr. Melnyk. So, how do we deal with that? “We answer evil through the practice of good, through music, through poetry, through everything that makes life richer and more meaningful. We answer through gatherings like today which keep the memory of those who perished and raise their existence, however brief or long it may have been...before God’s presence in prayer.”

As the last evocative notes of “Vichnaya pamiat” drifted over the solemn crowd of about 100, (sung by the St Mary the Protectress Church Choir under the direction of Claudia Melnyk), Hyman Gisser, cantor at the Congregation Beth-El said the kaddish, the ancient Aramaic prayer for the repose of the dead. When he ended, Rabbi Elina Bykova, a native of Kyiv who is now working in Temple Enamu-El-Beth Sholom in Montreal, read her own beautifully poetic Ukrainian translation of the kaddish...

For Ukrainians, involvement in this peace-through-dialogue world movement is very important. As Ivan Dziuba put it last year in his speech at Babyn Yar, “History willed that the fate of the Ukrainian and the Jewish people is intertwined and it is up to them to answer the challenge of that history. To become for all of humanity an example of how to respect each other, to know each other, to understand each other, and to help each other - that would be our mutual good contribution to world history.” And indeed, the first joint commemoration of the Holodomor and the Holocaust in Canada is a good beginning of that process.”

Source: <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/?item=2844>

Title: ***Orthodox Peace Fellowship***

Address: PO Box 6009  
Raleigh, NC 27628-6009  
USA

Contact: [incommunion@gmail.com](mailto:incommunion@gmail.com)

Description: The Orthodox Peace Fellowship of the Protection of the Mother of God is an association of Orthodox believers trying to apply the principles of the Gospel to situations of division and conflict, whether in the home, the parish, the community we live, the work place, within our particular nation, and between nations. We work for the conservation of God’s creation and especially of human life. We are not a political association. We support no political parties or candidates. Our work areas include:

- Theological research: Much needs to be done within the Church to better understand ways in which Orthodox Christians should respond to division, conflict, injustice, war and the relationship of the believer to the state. We encourage research on peace in the Bible, peace in the Liturgy, examples of ways Orthodox people and churches have responded to war from ancient to modern times, and the collection of relevant quotations and stories from the Fathers and the saints.
- Publications: Our quarterly journal, *In Communion*, not only provides its readers with helpful essays and news but serves as a forum for dialogue. The main articles from past issues of *In Communion* plus many other resources are made available via our web site: [www.incommunion.org](http://www.incommunion.org). OPF Members who use computers are invited to take part in the OPF List, a news and discussion forum.
- Practical assistance in conflict areas: As one of our members, a priest in the Republic of Georgia, points out: “Activity of the OPF is of particular importance in those Orthodox countries going through war and the horror of national conflict ... The OPF can help Orthodox people to practice peace and tolerance and to show that war and national conflict are satanic traps.”
- Structure: The Orthodox Peace Fellowship has members in North America, Europe, Asia and Africa. Its international secretariat in The Netherlands. Decisions are made by the OPF secretaries and officers in consultation with each other, with counsel from members and the Fellowship’s Board of Advisors. There is now an Orthodox Peace Fellowship in North America. There are occasional meetings and conferences in the United States as well as in Europe. We encourage the formation of local and national chapters.

Source: <http://incommunion.org/articles/introduction/what-is-the-opf>

## Protestant

Title: ***International Council of Christians and Jews***  
Address: ICCJ Office Martin Buber House  
P.O. Box 11 29  
64629 Heppenheim  
Germany  
Phone: (+49) 6252 93120  
Contact: [info@iccj-buberhouse.de](mailto:info@iccj-buberhouse.de)  
Web: <http://www.iccj.org>  
Description: ICCJ promotes understanding and cooperation between Christians and Jews based on respect for each other's identity and integrity; addresses issues of human rights and human dignity deeply enshrined in the traditions of Judaism and Christianity; counters all forms of prejudice, intolerance, discrimination, racism and the misuse of religion for national and political domination; affirms that in honest dialogue each person remains loyal to his or her own essential faith commitment, recognizing in the other person his or her integrity and otherness; coordinates worldwide activities through a programme of carefully structured conferences held regularly in different countries. The participants examine current issues across national and religious boundaries, enabling face-to-face exchanges of experience and expertise; encourages research and education at all levels, including universities and theological seminaries, to promote interreligious understanding among students, teachers, religious leaders, and scholars; performs outreach in regions that so far have little or no structured Jewish-Christian dialogue, such as Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Far East; provides a platform for wide-ranging theological debate in order to add a religious choice to the contemporary search for answers to existential and ethical challenges.  
Source: Provided by Barbara Fruth, Secretary

Title: ***The Commission on Interfaith Relations of the National Council of Churches***  
Address: National Council of Churches  
475 Riverside Drive, Suite 880  
New York, NY 10115  
USA  
Phone: 212-870-2560  
Contact: [shanta@nccusa.org](mailto:shanta@nccusa.org)  
(Rev. Dr. Shanta Premawardhana, Director, Interfaith Relations)  
Web: <http://www.nccusa.org/interfaith/ifrhome.html>



**Description:** The National Council of Churches' Commission on Interfaith Relations and Office for Interfaith Relations is charged with coordinating and facilitating the interfaith work of the NCC. Our goal is to help the NCC and member communions explore the challenges and opportunities of living among people of other faiths. The Commission exercises special responsibility within the life of the Council for programs, resources and communication integral to the building and maintenance of interfaith relationships, and to theological reflection of these relationships. The Commission works with and on behalf of the churches to strengthen relationships between Christians and people of other faiths through study, dialogue, the development of cooperative programs and the sharing of resources and information. It provides an ecumenical forum for sharing, common counsel and theological reflection regarding interfaith relations, and coordinates its work with other entities of the Council as appropriate.

**Source:** <http://www.nccusa.org/interfaith/ifrhome.html>

**Title:** ***BRÜCKE – KÖPRÜ***  
**Address:** Begegnung von Christen und Muslimen  
Leonhardstraße 13  
90443 Nürnberg  
Germany  
**Phone:** 09 11-28 77 313  
**Contact:** [info@bruecke-nuernberg.de](mailto:info@bruecke-nuernberg.de)  
**Web:** <http://www.bruecke-nuernberg.de>

**Description:** Motivated by their Christian faith and perspective the workers of the BRÜCKE – KÖPRÜ invite Christian and Muslim men and women for different projects. They open a space for witness of the Christian and the Muslim faith. The projects unify academic and low level educated people dealing with Christian-Muslim issues. At least 150 visitors regularly attend the programs of the BRÜCKE – KÖPRÜ. Twice a year the BRÜCKE – KÖPRÜ edits a program in German, Turkish and Arabic language which announces the almost daily offers of Christian-Muslim Encounter. The Bridge is a symbol for the encounter of Christians and Muslims. One pillar stands for Christian identity, the other for Islamic identity. Encounter is possible, where people dare to leave own side for entering the bridge.

**Source:** Provided by Dorris Zenns, Diakonin

**Title:** ***The Garden of Forgiveness***  
**Address:** 83 Christopher Street  
New York, NY 10014  
USA  
**Phone:** 646-251-1181  
**Web:** [www.gofnyc.org](http://www.gofnyc.org)

**Description:** The Garden of Forgiveness is an interfaith educational non-profit that seeks to teach individuals and communities about the power of forgiveness to heal the past and create the future. Our inspiration is the Garden of Forgiveness currently under construction in Beirut, Lebanon, intended as a place for reflection where one can let go of past grievances and overcome any desire for revenge. In the spirit of interreligious dialogue, this garden is surrounded by three churches, three mosques, and one synagogue. Our organization is now working to create similar gardens in communities around the world; each Garden of Forgiveness will offer a permanent and poignant reminder that there are always alternatives to violence. Our educational initiatives include multi-faith symposia on forgiveness as a virtue and strategy for overcoming cycles of bitterness, violence, and revenge; we also teach courses for high school students and adults on “Peacemaking through Forgiveness,” in which we consider how various religious traditions understand these important subjects and what we can do ourselves to promote healing and peace in our communities.

Though intended to be completely interfaith, our organization does have strong roots in Christianity and its teachings on forgiveness. Of course, forgiveness is valued by all the world’s religions, but Jesus taught a particularly revolutionary practice of forgiveness. In the Lord’s Prayer, for example, we find that our own forgiveness is contingent upon our willingness to forgive others: “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Jesus embodied this forgiveness to the very last, in his dying words crying out, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” As Jurgen Moltmann said, “With [Christ’s prayer of forgiveness from the cross] the universal religion of revenge is overcome and the universal law of retaliation is annulled.” Our work is also inspired by Desmond Tutu’s book *No Future Without Forgiveness*, as well as countless other leaders from other religious traditions who practiced and promoted nonviolent responses to conflict.

Our Executive Director, the Reverend Lyndon F. Harris, came to forgiveness in his work overseeing the massive relief operation at St. Paul’s Chapel in the months following the terrorist attacks on 9/11/01. One of Rev. Harris’ central duties during this time was to walk through the former World Trade Center site and perform blessings and last rites over body bags. Each day as he walked through the site, Rev. Harris was haunted by the question, “How in God’s name—literally, how in God’s name—do we stop this cycle of violence and revenge?” It wasn’t until he learned of the pioneering work of Alexandra Asseily—the godmother of the Garden of Forgiveness in Lebanon—that he came to the answer: forgiveness.

Of course, he had been preaching about forgiveness for many years as a priest—but it wasn’t until he stood in the epicenter of devastation at Ground Zero that he finally understood its full power and why, as

Desmond Tutu put it, we can have “no future without forgiveness.” All of us working on this project have seen the power of forgiveness to heal past wounds and age-old enmities, having heard from countless inspiring speakers about how they reclaimed their lives by choosing to forgive, refusing to either carry around bitterness or perpetuate the cycle of violence. It has been an honor to be part of this work, and it has helped me heal my own personal grief and live my life with greater joy and purpose.

Source: Provided by Carly Ritter, Executive Assistant, The Garden of Forgiveness

Title: ***Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Ministries***

Address: 4753 N. Broadway, Suite 401  
Chicago, IL 60640

Phone: 773-989-5647

Web: [www.irim.org](http://www.irim.org)

Description: Step into the offices of Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Ministries, and you will not be overwhelmed with any religious regalia. Rarely will you hear the recitation of a religious text or even a mention of religious inspiration. In fact, a casual observer won't hear much beyond the ring of the Interfaith office telephones and a multitude of world languages discussing the logistics of landing a job or filing for immigration papers. Nevertheless, faith infuses nearly every component of these operations, and Interfaith's confines stretch far beyond its office.

Each year, the United States of America opens its doors to tens of thousands of refugees from six continents, many of whom find their new homes in Chicago and its surrounding suburbs. Interfaith helps refugees acclimate to a new and potentially confusing environment. The process by which a refugee arrives at a particular resettlement agency is long and inundated with bureaucracy, but their ultimate destination is determined by one of ten national voluntary agencies (VOLAG), many of whom ascribe to a religious denomination. Whereas most resettlement agencies serve as a direct branch of a single VOLAG, Interfaith draws its name and unique niche in Illinois by resettling refugees placed by three VOLAGS: Church World Service, Episcopal Migration Ministries, and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. And while the VOLAG names denote a Protestant base, Interfaith serves refugees of any and all religious traditions, and unites Chicago congregations of all faiths under the umbrella of a common mission.

By definition, a refugee is a person who has left their homeland and cannot return owing to persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, political beliefs or membership in a social group. The people Interfaith serves have fled their homelands and must begin a healing process in a confusing new country. Ultimately, it is Interfaith's hope that

refugees achieve self-sufficiency and carve out their own niche in the United States.

Beyond the initial resettlement and placement, Interfaith offers an array of programs including English Language Training, Vocational Training, Employment Counseling, and specialty programs for youth, women, and the elderly, Interfaith opens a cultural space for newcomers to flourish. Therefore, Interfaith serves as a catalyst for hospitality; a concept shared by every major religion. Interfaith engages individual congregations of the various faiths to accept the “other” and empower them to live and succeed in the United States. Interfaith, thereby, promotes a common thread among all faiths by strengthening local hospitality towards people of every nationality and belief.

Serving refugees and immigrants transforms lives - most especially, our own: the care-givers, the servants. We learn about distant countries and different cultures; we meet new friends from everywhere. We develop deep respect for people whose backgrounds and ethnicities might be polar opposites of our own. We even come to know our own Chicago and its myriad communities in new and richer ways. We admire the hope and enthusiasm with which newcomers to our community eagerly strive to put the pieces of their broken lives back together again - right here, in a vastly different world than the one they've left behind. We grow in character as we recognize how blessed we've been to live in the safe, bountiful comfort of the USA. And then we're deeply humbled as our new friend with few worldly possessions reaches into her small suitcase to present us with a simple gift as token of her appreciation for the warm welcome to America given her - and we can only marvel at the stranger's grace.

Source: Greg Wangerin, Executive Director; Kim Hillebrand, Development Director, Interfaith Refugee and Immigration ministries

Title: ***Liberian Council of Churches***

Address: Council House  
15 Street  
off Tubman Blvd.  
P.O.Box 2191  
Monrovia, Liberia

Contact: stjohnyork1@yahoo.com

Description: Rev. St John York writes: The Liberian Council of Churches by virtue of her history of establishment was to promote unity among the Churches in Liberia, but it later became very popular as the Churches' apparatus for advocacy against ills in the Liberian society at large. The LCC became the beacon of hope for the oppressed in the Community and gradually developed programs that opened dialogue avenues with other

religious groupings in Liberia, particular to promote reconciliation after the long conflict that disintegrated the various communities.

The strong urge for the promotion of co-existence among religious peoples in Liberia became necessary during the prolonged conflict in Liberia from 1990 to 2003, when political, social, ethnic and economic factors all became apparent in fueling the continuity of the conflict. All Liberians had to be sensitized to become partakers in the process. The Liberian Council of Churches, especially the area of involving other religious leaders outside Christianity was institutionalized and I became much involved in this process as the Coordinator for Inter-religious Affairs.

The fact that the Religious Leaders were successful in their intervention of the nature of political crises in Liberia proves the extent of influence religion has on the lives of majority of people not only in Liberia but across our universe. The basic idea from my working in this field of collaboration and engagement with other religious peoples is to neutralize the strong sense of Fundamentalism which many religions by themselves tend to breed.

Personally, I am motivated by this fact also that all conflicts have some traits of some kinds faith values of individuals attached to them and if we must live in peace with each other, we must also respect the rights of other lives to existence. However, there is a challenge which we must share and that is the lack of man's authority to make effect on some of the many dogmas in some religions that tend to complicate dialogues and engagements of religions. Men of goodwill for the promotion of peaceful co-existence of peoples of the world must be sincere critics of the odds and demand change from those societies where fundamental beliefs tend to endanger the lives of others and we must irrespective of our faith values belief that this is free World for all.

With this I want to be quite personal on an issue where a popular Muslim cleric in Liberia who has been working with the Christian group for a long period to the extent that he has won a lot of respect from the Community did. We were attending the STAR Workshop (a Church World Service support program to Liberians of all religious backgrounds) in 2004 and this cleric was called upon to present a paper. He did it successful but to the surprise of the participants when asked what was his view on inter-marriages between Christians and Muslims in Liberia where it is largely observed that Muslim men are getting more married to Christian girls but their tradition does not allow the non-Muslim to marry the Muslim? He responded to the participants that according to his belief as a Muslim, a Muslim woman cannot marry to a Christian because of the Christian's unbelief in the sovereignty of Allah. Academicians may challenge his view but the issue here is about a belief. How does someone who enjoy so much confidence of his neighbors be so blunt to reciprocate same and the blame certainly goes on a belief.

However such form of challenges and other challenges as shall be envisaged in their contexts because circumstances are relevant to their setting should not deter the process of seeking more answers and peaceful ways to remove hurdles across the paths to peace. The World must be able to live in peace and joy with all her numerous inexplicable gifts and Life.

In October 2004, there was a conflict that took place in Monrovia and its surroundings that resulted into the burning of worship places. Over 20 Churches and Mosques were destroyed, 30 plus were reported dead and 300 persons were wounded. Though the conflict ceased after a week the condition in some of the Communities particularly in Jacobstown, Paynesville, there is a brewing resentment between the two Communities that were engrossed in the conflict. This conflict also has its roots in the prolonged civil conflict and strains the relations of some groups of Muslims and some tribes in Liberia.

I have done a thorough research on this conflict that took place in Jacobstown, Paynesville on October 29, 2004 as an effort of encouraging dialogue between the two Communities. Some of the recommendations put forward included the hosting of a joint leadership workshop of both Communities (Islam and Christian). The leaders of the Community need to set the pace for the peaceful co-existence of their peoples proactively to prevent a reoccurrence of conflicts. As Liberia forges forward with her developmental programs after the long period of war, it's important to make sure that these developments are built on good understanding of mutual co-existence of peoples.

Source: Provided by Rev. St. John York, BTH. Coordinator, Inter-Religious Affairs, Liberian Council of Churches

Title: ***Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center***

Address: PO Box 49084  
Jerusalem 91491  
Palestine via Israel

Phone: (+972) 2 5327136

Contact: [sabeel@sabeel.org](mailto:sabeel@sabeel.org)

Web: <http://www.sabeel.org>

Description: Sabeel is an ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians. Inspired by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, this liberation theology seeks to deepen the faith of Palestinian Christians, to promote unity among them toward social action. Sabeel strives to develop a spirituality based on love, justice, peace, nonviolence, liberation and reconciliation for the different national and faith communities. Through open and respectful discussion about diversity and commonalities, the Palestinian community can develop a deeper sense of being one people. In proposing to establish such a dialogue, Sabeel seeks

to break down barriers of ignorance and prejudice, to achieve higher levels of understanding, respect and acceptance, and to empower all Palestinians to work together for peace in their homeland.

Source: <http://www.sabeel.org>

Title: ***World Council of Churches***

Address: PO Box 2100,  
150 route de Ferney, CH-1211,  
Geneva 2  
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 791 6111

Web: <http://wcc-coe.org>

Description: The World Council of Churches (WCC) is the broadest and most inclusive among the many organized expressions of the modern ecumenical movement, a movement whose goal is Christian unity. The team on interreligious relations promotes contact between Christians and neighbors of other faiths primarily through multi-lateral and bi-lateral dialogue with partners of other faiths that are aimed at building trust, meeting common challenges and addressing conflictive and divisive issues.

Source: <http://wcc-coe.org>

Title: ***The Protestant Christian Church in Bali***

Address: Synod Office of the Protestant Christian Church in Bali  
Jl. Dr. Sutomo  
101 Denpasar Bali  
Indonesia

Phone: 62 361 424862

Contact: [gkpbbali@indosat.net.id](mailto:gkpbbali@indosat.net.id)

Web: <http://www.christianchurchbali.org>

Description: The Protestant Christian Church in Bali participates in interreligious dialogue and activities with the following three focuses: Words dialogue where we sit together (Hindu, Moslem, Buddhist, Christian and Catholic) to discuss and to learn one another; Work dialogue where we work together to do something which is useful for the common life; Living dialogue where all religious community in Bali have tolerance by offering good deeds and respect one another.

Source: Provided by Rev. I Made Priana, General Secretary

Title: ***All Africa Conference of Churches***

Address: P.O. Box 14205- 00800  
Westlands, Nairobi

Kenya  
Phone: 254-020-441483, 441338/9  
Contact: [secretariat@aacc-ceta.org](mailto:secretariat@aacc-ceta.org)  
Web: <http://www.aacc-ceta.org>  
Description: The All Africa Conference of Churches is a fellowship of churches and institutions working together in their common witness to the Gospel by: mobilizing to faithfully live the message of God's love; nurturing a common understanding of the faith; interpreting and responding to challenges to human dignity; and acting prophetically in Word, Life and Service for healing. In collaboration with the Church World Service (CWS), the AACC began preparations to convene an interfaith summit on Africa to be held in July 2006 in Washington, USA. The summit would bring together 50 religious leaders and lay persons from Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim and Baha'i faith traditions to come together and struggle with the challenges before the continent of Africa and to pray together for the intervention of the divine.  
Source: <http://www.aacc-ceta.org>

Title: ***The Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians***  
Address: UNISA Theology  
P.O. Box 392, PRETORIA 0003  
South Africa  
(Professor Ramathate Dolamo)  
Phone: +27 12 429 3332  
Contact: [dolamrth@unisa.ac.za](mailto:dolamrth@unisa.ac.za)  
Web: <http://www.eatwot.org>  
Description: EATWOT aims the development of and engagement with gender theologies and new methods for such theologizing which challenge patriarchal privileges and require the reconstruction of ideologies of all genders; Exploration of the authority of the biblical text in our theological endeavors along with naming additional oral and written sources to be engaged and explored in the formation of these new theological endeavors; Reaffirmation of praxiological methods which constructively engage the tensions between action on the ground and theological formulations and constructions; Affirmation of our commitment as theologians to working with gender, racial, ethnic, indigenous, and sexual groups in mutuality, learning from each other to enhance the building of viable liberatory communities; Developing dialogical styles and approaches to interaction with each other and with members of other religious groups which are non-hegemonic and which affirm the humanity and worthiness of all parties in the dialogue.  
Source: Provided by Dr. Diego Irarrazaval, Former president of EATWOT



Title: ***The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland***  
Address: The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland  
Laugavegi 31, 150 Reykjavík  
Iceland  
Phone: +354 535 1500  
Contact: kirkjan@kirkjan.is  
Web: <http://www.kirkjan.is>  
Description: The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland initiated the Interfaith Forum of Iceland in November 2006, life-stance organizations concerned with issues of belief and allied parties. A total of 13 religious groups participate in the forum. The objective of the Interfaith Forum is to advance the cause of tolerance and respect between people of different philosophies of life, religious groups and religions and to protect the freedom of religion and other human rights.  
Source: Provided by Steinunn Arnþrúður Björnsdóttir, Ecumenical and Communications Officer

Title: ***Henry Martyn Institute***  
Address: 6-3-128/1  
(Beside National Police Academy)  
Shivarampally  
Hyderabad 500052  
India  
Phone: 24014258  
Contact: hyd1\_hmiis@sancharnet.in  
Web: <http://www.hmiindia.com>  
Description: The institute is an ecumenical Christian organization, dedicated to the objective study and teaching of Islam, the promotion of interfaith dialogue and reconciliation. HMI's efforts are grounded in the contemporary context of inter-religious misunderstanding and violence, and emphasize activities that remove prejudice, resolve conflict and increase trust and cooperation between individuals and groups.  
Source: <http://www.hmiindia.com>

Title: ***The NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions***  
Address: Karasuma Shimotachiuri  
Kamikyo-ku  
Kyoto 602-8011  
Japan  
Phone: +81-(0)75-432-1945  
Contact: studycen@mbox.kyoto-inet.or.jp  
Web: <http://www.japanese-religions.jp>

Description: The NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions is a research institute of the National Christian Council in Japan (NCC-J), an umbrella of the Protestant churches. Its staff members are Japanese and foreign, Buddhist and Christian experts in religious studies and interreligious dialogue. In response to global tensions among religions today, the Interreligious Studies in Japan Program (ISJP) offers systematic study of Japanese religions and provides opportunities for interreligious dialogue. Its aim is to promote mutual understanding as a basis for peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

Source: <http://www.japanese-religions.jp>

Title: ***Auburn Seminary- The Center for Multifaith Education***

Address: 3041 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027  
USA

Contact: (212) 662-4315

Web: <http://www.auburnsem.org/multifaith/>

Description: In a world where religion is often associated with hatred, fear, and division, the Center for Multifaith Education brings people together for religious dialogue and engagement that foster illumination, understanding and compassion.

Drawing people from a wide spectrum of religious traditions, the Center gives participants - both devout and secular - an opportunity to learn with dynamic teachers, engage sacred texts, discuss challenging issues, and experience the thriving ritual life in New York City. Working with groups including attorneys and judges, healthcare professionals, business executives, women, and young leaders, the Center sponsors forums where leaders gain insight into a range of religious perspectives and reach out across traditional boundaries to turn ethical convictions into social action.

In addition to the many ways in which the Center draws participants into face-to-face encounters, the Center recognizes the power of television, radio and the Internet to educate and inspire millions. As part of the center, Auburn Media works to promote a variety of passionate and articulate religious voices in the media, and to help producers and directors better engage the new challenges that diversity presents.

Source: <http://www.auburnsem.org/multifaith/about.asp>

Title: ***Church World Service***

Address: 475 Riverside Dr.  
New York, NY 10115  
USA

Contact: 212-870-2061

Fax: 212-870-3523  
[info@churchworldservice.org](mailto:info@churchworldservice.org)  
Web: <http://www.churchworldservice.org>  
Description: Founded in 1946, Church World Service is the relief, development, and refugee assistance ministry of 35 Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican denominations in the United States. Working in partnership with indigenous organizations in more than 80 countries, CWS works worldwide to meet human needs and foster self-reliance for all whose way is hard.  
Within the United States, Church World Service assists communities in responding to disasters, resettles refugees, promotes fair national and international policies, provides educational resources, and offers opportunities to join a people-to-people network of local and global caring through participation in CROP Hunger Walks, the Tools & Blankets Program, and the CWS Kits Program.  
Source: <http://www.churchworldservice.org/aboutcws.htm>

Title: ***Joppa Baptist Interfaith Interfaith Network***  
Web: <http://www.joppa-uk.org/>  
Description: We believe:

- God creates humanity in all its rich diversity.
- Christ breaks down the barriers that divide us.
- The Spirit empowers us to find truth wherever it may be.

Our aim is to enable Baptist Christians to:

- Hold together our convictions about religious freedom for all and for the proclamation of the Gospel
- face the realities of living in a multi-faith society
- reflect on mission, evangelism, dialogue and service

#### WHAT WE OFFER

- Conferences: As advertised. If you have ideas for subjects that would be of interest, do make contact.
- Baptist Assembly sessions: An annual event which has attracted speakers such as Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain and Dr Brian Stanley, Director of the Henry Martyn Centre and Fellow, St Edmund's College, Cambridge.
- A quarterly journal: Each subscriber receives three copies of Joppa Journal each year. It includes articles, information about forthcoming courses and conferences from across the country, book reviews and a calendar of the main religious festivals due that quarter.
- Advice: Our subscribers are our greatest resource and we can put you in touch with those who have the experience you seek, as well as providing links to the Interfaith networks of other denominations.

- “Joppa Link” email updates: Joining the “Joppa Link” enables you to keep in touch throughout the year and to ask for help or advice from other Joppa members.

Source: [http://www.joppa-uk.org/html/we\\_offer.html](http://www.joppa-uk.org/html/we_offer.html)

Title ***Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance***

Address: 150 route de Ferney  
P.O. Box 2100  
CH-1211 Geneva 2  
Switzerland

Telephone: +41 22 791 6723

Web: <http://www.e-alliance.ch/index.jsp>

Description: The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance is a broad ecumenical network for international cooperation in advocacy on global trade and HIV and AIDS. More than 100 churches and church-related organizations have joined the Alliance by committing themselves to "speak out with one voice against injustice, to confront structures of power, practices and attitudes which deprive human beings of dignity and to offer alternative visions based on the Gospel." This commitment to joint action brings with it enormous strength and responsibility.

The Alliance has identified the HIV and AIDS pandemic as one of the gravest challenges to health and also to the prospects of social and economic development and global security. The campaign, "Keep the Promise." holds individuals, religious leaders, faith organizations, governments and intergovernmental organizations accountable for the commitments they have made and advocates for further efforts and resources to fight HIV and AIDS. The campaign works to protect the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS, promote an attitude of care and solidarity which rejects all forms of stigmatization and discrimination, and advocates for access to necessary forms of treatment as well as expand efforts for education and prevention.

The Alliance is also committed to working for justice in global trade. Trade is not an end in itself, but should be an instrument for the promotion of human well-being, sustainable communities and economic justice. The global campaign, Trade for People - Not People for Trade, works to build a movement of people within the churches and church-related organizations to promote trade justice. We do this by calling for recognition of the priority of human rights agreements over trade agreements.

Silence is not an option for the Christian. Nor is inaction. Injustice and suffering compel our advocacy in a world that desperately needs people of faith working together for change.

Source: <http://www.e-alliance.ch/index.jsp>

Title: ***KAIROS- Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives***  
Address: 129 St. Clair Ave. West  
Toronto, ON  
Canada M4V 1N5  
Phone: 416-463-5312 | Toll-free: 1-877-403-8933 | Fax: 416-463-5569  
Web: <http://www.kairoscanada.org>  
Description: KAIROS unites churches and religious organizations in a faithful ecumenical response to the call to "do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). We deliberate on issues of common concern, advocate for social change and join with people of faith and goodwill in action for social transformation.  
KAIROS unites Canadian churches and religious organizations in a faithful ecumenical response to the call to "do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).  
Informed by biblical teaching, KAIROS deliberates on issues of common concern, striving to be a prophetic voice in the public sphere.  
Inspired by a vision of God's compassionate justice, KAIROS advocates for social change, amplifying and strengthening the public witness of its members.  
Responding to Christ by engaging in social transformation, KAIROS empowers the people of God and is empowered by them to live out their faith in action for justice and peace, joining with those of goodwill in Canada and around the world.  
Source: <http://www.kairoscanada.org>

Title: ***St. Paul Denver***  
Address: St. Paul's United Methodist Church  
1615 Ogden Street  
Denver, Colorado 80218  
Contact: 303-832-4929  
Web: <http://www.stpauldenver.com>  
Description: We are a United Methodist, Reconciling, and Buddhist Christian InterFaith Community.  

- We believe that love and compassion are the essence of Spirit.
- We explore Life with open hearts and open minds.
- We cultivate personal transformation and committed activism. We welcome individuals of every race, faith, culture, status, ability, orientation, and identity.
- We nurture the Sacred within us all.

The Buddhist/Christian Interfaith Community Celebrates Pluralism  
As we gather together from differing faith perspectives (Buddhist, Christian, and various others), we remain rooted in our own traditions without the compulsion to force common ground.

Yet, without the need to defend our own turf, we are profoundly challenged by one another's wisdom, delighting in mutual enhancement. Maybe more importantly, we always move beyond words as we share sacred silence.

Source: <http://www.stpauldenver.com/interfaith.html>

## Roman Catholic

Title: ***Centro de Documentazione SIDIC***

Address: Piazza della Pilotta, 4  
00187 - Roma

Phone: +39 06 6701.5555

Web: <http://www.sidic.org/en/default.asp>

Description: The SIDIC Rome Center - Service International de Documentation Judéo-Chrétienne (International Service of Jewish-Christian Documentation), one of the fruits of the Second Vatican Council, was created in November 1965 by several bishops and experts who had labored for the declaration *Nostra Aetate* (par. 4) concerning the Christian Churches' relations with the Jewish people.

Underlying all of SIDIC Rome's work is the call of the Church to understand and esteem the Jewish people as it understands itself, and to deepen Christian faith through the study of the faith of the Jewish people, whom Pope John Paul II referred to as "our elder brothers."

Source: <http://www.sidic.org/en/chisiamo.asp>

Title: ***Monastic Interreligious Dialogue***

Address: St. John's Abby  
Collegeville, MN 56321

Phone: N/A

Web: <http://monasticdialog.com/>

Description: In response to the Vatican's request that Catholic monks and nuns assume a leadership role in the dialogue between Christianity and the great religions of the East, Monastic Interreligious Dialogue/Dialogue Interreligieux Monastique was established by the Benedictine Confederation in 1978.

In North America, Monastic Interreligious Dialogue (MID) is an organization of Catholic monastic women and men who bring their charism of listening and hospitality to interreligious dialogue. Dialogue is conducted at the level of spiritual practice and experience for the purpose of mutual spiritual benefit and communion.

Over the past 25 years we have learned from happy experience that monastic interreligious dialogue, while increasing our understanding and appreciation of other religious traditions, also helps us come to a deeper

comprehension and a fuller expression of our own spiritual and theological heritage.

Source: <http://www.monasticdialog.com/mid.php?id=12>

Title: ***Interfaith Internships***

Address: CP. 374, 15 Rue du Grand Bureau  
CH-1211, Geneve 4, Switzerland

Phone: 41 22 823 0707

Web: <http://www.paxromana.org>

Description: “Pax Romana ICMICA/MIIC is an international Association of Catholic professionals and intellectuals composed of local federations, groups and individuals, an open forum for intellectual sharing and dialogue among different cultures, generations and professions, a social movement for empowerment, advocacy and solidarity for a peaceful, equitable and sustainable world, a global network of ideas, insights and commitment based on a Christian vision and mission, a member of the Conference of International Catholic Organizations (ICOs) recognized by the Holy See, a member of Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in consultative relationship with the United Nations (CONGO), a member of the global coalition for the Earth Charter campaign.

Was founded in Rome in April 1947 as an international association of Catholic professionals and intellectuals. However, its historical roots can be traced back to 1921 when Pax Romana was created as an international association of Catholic university students based in Fribourg, Switzerland.

The name Pax Romana is shared with our sister movement, International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS) based in Paris, France. The International Secretariat is presently located in Geneva, Switzerland.”

On Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2005, 16 young people from 14 different nationalities and five religions arrived at Bilbao to form part of the “Youth Internship Programme on the Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue” seven days before the beginning of the main-congress: Within the framework of the Congress “Nuevos desafíos en un mundo que ansía la paz” which took place in Bilbao from 11. - 13. December 2005. A group of young people from different places of different continents got the opportunity to get in contact and to share their experiences with their own but also with other cultures and religions.

Source: <http://www.paxromana.org/node/209?PHPSESSID=f68884fb026854eb66d727da66a0abd2>

Title: ***Seminar on Catholic-Muslim Understandings of Marriage***

Address: 383 Albert Street  
East Melbourne VIC 3002  
Australia

Phone: (03) 9926-5708

Web: [www.melbourne.catholic.org.au](http://www.melbourne.catholic.org.au)

Description: “Since interreligious relations are clearly acknowledged as an essential work of the Church, the Catholic Interfaith Committee (CIC) is committed to deepening dialogue and mutual respect between the Church and members of other religious traditions. The CIC aspires to promote the teachings and directives of the Second Vatican Council on interfaith dialogue, under the leadership of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne. Through fostering a spirituality which welcomes and appreciates what is positive in all religions and cultures and, indeed, in secular thought as a gift from God, the CIC promotes joint witness to the importance of religious faith in society. In this way the diverse traditions will contribute to a climate of peace in the world. The CIC has a primary responsibility to provide a high level of support, advice, service and information to the agencies and parishes of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.”

A seminar on Catholic-Muslim understandings of marriage, organized by the CENTACARE Catholic-Muslim Working Group, [was] held on Saturday, 19 March 2005 between 2.30pm and 5.00pm. Topics include:

- ‘Role of Marriage and the Family’
- ‘Role of Women in Islam’

Source: [http://www.melbourne.catholic.org.au/eic/documents/CICDIGESTforNovember2004withnewLogo-FINAL\\_000.pdf](http://www.melbourne.catholic.org.au/eic/documents/CICDIGESTforNovember2004withnewLogo-FINAL_000.pdf)

Title: ***National Conference of Catholic Bishops***

Address: 3211 4th Street, N.E.,  
Washington DC 20017-1194

Phone: (202) 541-3000

Web: <http://www.nccbuscc.org/>

Description: The Bishops’ Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs is a commission of bishops assisted by experts for ecumenical affairs established by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. This committee is the territorial commission for ecumenical matters in the United States in accord with the directives set forth in the Directory for the Application of the Decisions of the Second Ecumenical Council for the Vatican Concerning Ecumenical Matters (Nn. 7, 8 & 6) promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI on May 14, 1967, Pentecost Sunday.

The Bishops’ Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs has a mandate from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to give guidance in ecumenical and interreligious affairs and determine concrete ways of acting in accordance with the Decree on Ecumenism and on Non-Christian Religious of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican and



with other ordinances and legitimate customs, taking account of the time, place and persons they are concerned with but also of the good of the universal Church.”

Faiths in the World is a subcommittee of CADEIO (Catholic Association of Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers). Its purpose is to: To develop programs and resources to assist diocesan officers in furthering the work of interreligious understanding and harmony. To stimulate a network and exchange of ideas, experiences, and resources among diocesan officers and scholars of religions. To cooperate with the Bishops’ Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs in the promotion of interreligious relations and dialogue. To represent the CADEIO members at interreligious events and meetings of organizations and other agencies promoting interreligious relations.

Source: <http://www.usccb.org/seia/irother.shtml#2>

Title: ***Young Catholic Women's Interfaith Fellowship***

Address: N/A

Web: [www.catholic.org.au](http://www.catholic.org.au)

Description: “Eight outstanding women from around Australia are undertaking the second Young Catholic Women’s Interfaith Fellowship program. The Fellowships are being offered through the Office for the Participation of Women (OPW) established by the Australian Catholic Bishop’s Conference. The fellowship was the vision of the Commission for Australian Catholic Women and is now being offered for the second year. The Fellowships would not be possible without the generous sponsorship of many religious orders, catholic agencies and dioceses.

The Fellowship aims at promoting the participation of young women in the Catholic Church in Australia. The program specifically targets the development of leadership skills in promoting interfaith relations.”

Source: <http://www.cacw.catholic.org.au/news/news.asp?id=634>

Title: ***Tekakwitha Conference***

Address: Tekakwitha Conference National Center  
P.O. Box 6768  
Great Falls, MT 59406-6768

Contact: [tekconf@att.net](mailto:tekconf@att.net)  
(+406)-727-0147

Web: <http://www.tekconf.org>

Description: The purpose of the Tekakwitha Conference is the evangelization of Native American Catholics. Our goals are: to unify Native American Catholics while respecting tribal differences; to empower Native American Catholics to live in harmony with their Catholic and Native

Spirituality; to promote and maintain on-going communication and involvement between tribes and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in America; to pray for the canonization of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, to share the story of her life, and to follow her example of holiness; to encourage the development of local adult and youth Kateri Circles; to cooperate with local, regional, and national groups to realize this vision. The Tekakwitha Conference is working to accomplish these goals through a network of local Kateri Circles, Regional Mini-Tekakwitha Conferences and the National Tekakwitha Conference membership. Tekakwitha Conference Annual Conference: Affirming Our Faith as Native American Catholics under the Protection of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha. The 69th Tekakwitha Conference Annual Conference will be held at Edmonton, Alberta July 2 - 6, 2008.

History of Inculturation at Tekakwitha Conferences: Guide to Adaptations Made at Past Tekakwitha Conference Liturgies This document summarizes the cultural adaptations made at liturgies at the National Tekakwitha Conferences from 1978 to 2001. This research is ongoing and this is a preliminary document as more research needs to be done on past conferences and future conferences need to be documented.

**Leadership and Presence:** Since 1978 the conference has stressed the most important inculturation symbol—Native people themselves as the body of Christ. Native Bishops, priests, sisters, deacons, and lay people have had a central role in the liturgies at the conferences. Native people have lead the procession, sometimes in significant numbers, presided at some of the liturgies in their role as bishops, priests and deacons, have served the community as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, presented the gifts at the offertory, and sang in Native choirs.

**Native Ritual Traditions:** Cultural adaptation at the Tekakwitha conferences has included Native forms of prayer and ritual since 1978. This has been done not only at sunrise or other prayer but also within the liturgy itself. At many conferences Native deacons or leaders conducted the penitential rite using smudging (purification with smoke) as a sign of contrition and cleansing. At the elevation, the sacred elements have been presented to the four directions at some conferences reflecting Native ritual spatial orientation. Several conferences incorporated prayers with a sacred pipe, a prayer instrument sacred to many Native communities, at the time of the opening prayer, penitential rite or offertory. Native leaders, some ordained by the Church others whose traditional authority is recognized by the community, conducted these rituals.

**Music:** Consistently liturgies at the National Conference have utilized traditional Catholic hymns, various Native religious musical forms (different according to the cultures represented) and the adaptation of Catholic hymns to Native lyrics and/or Native musical instruments. Because of the wide variety of Native languages English is a common language at the conference. However the musical language of each group,

particularly of the host group, is both a gift of the Creator and an important symbol for that group and the continuity of Native peoples in the Church.

**Native Musical Instruments:** The drum, an instrument common to most Native people but used in a variety of ways, has been consistently used at Tekakwitha conference liturgies since 1979. Depending on the cultural context, rattles, flutes, and bells might also be used. The human voice is another essential instrument and hymns have been used at all Tekakwitha liturgies expressing the importance of music in both the Native and Catholic ritual traditions. The guitar has been adapted into Native liturgical music, as have the organ and even Gregorian chant, which is sung in Native languages.

**Native Prayer Instruments:** The National Conference liturgies incorporate prayer instruments sacred to many Native Americans and some specific to regional groups. Native conference participants have used sacred items such as eagle staffs, eagle feathers, eagle feather fans, sacred pipes, incense (smudge), water, cedar or other branches as sprinklers, colors to mark the four directions of the world, and representations of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha placed in Native designed shrines. At some liturgies pipe carriers (those designated to pray with the sacred pipe) have carried their pipes in the liturgical procession. The pipe and other prayer instruments have been placed in honored locations such as on top of the altar at some of the conference liturgies.

**Cross and Feathers Newsletter:** Cross and Feathers is published four times per year: January, March, May, November/December. Our members are invited to submit articles for Cross and Feathers. These must be received by the first of the month prior to publication.

Source: [http://www.tekconf.org/liturgy/history\\_inculturation.html](http://www.tekconf.org/liturgy/history_inculturation.html)

Title: ***The Interfaith Hunger Project***

Contact: (806) 376-4571, ext. 231

Web: [www.catholicfamilyservice.org/](http://www.catholicfamilyservice.org/)

Description: “The Inter Faith Hunger Project supplies food and household needs to the elderly and disabled of Amarillo. It is located in a rent-free store downstairs at the Tyler Street Resource Center, 200 S. Tyler Street in downtown Amarillo. Run entirely by volunteers, the store provides coupons for purchases to elderly and disabled folks with little or no income. Volunteers also take needed food and items to those who are shut-in and unable to get out to shop.

God of Wonders Church is sponsoring a project to stock the Inter Faith Hunger Project with enough food and household needs to take care of 350 people per month for a YEAR!”

Source: <http://www.catholicfamilyservice.org/whatsnew.asp>

Title: ***Antisemitism: The Historical Legacy and the Continuing Challenge for Christians***

Address: 155 E. Superior Street  
Chicago, IL 60611

Phone: 312-751- 8200

Web: /www.archchicago.org

Description: On March 23, 1995, Joseph Cardinal Bernardin delivered a lecture entitled "Antisemitism: The Historical Legacy and the Continuing Challenge for Christians" in Senate Hall of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The lecture was the centerpiece of his visit to Israel.

The Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture continues this dialogue between Jews and Catholics with an annual lectureship on the theological issues affecting their relationship.

The eleventh annual Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture was held on Tuesday, February 28, 2006. Fr. John Pawlikowski, O.S.M. and Rabbi David Sandmel addressed the topic, "Nostra Aetate 40 Years After the Second Vatican Council: Where Catholic-Jewish Relations Have Come and Where They Need to Go". Ms. Judith Valente moderated the conversation and Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I. delivered a closing reflection."

Source: [http://www.archchicago.org/departments/ecumenical/cardinal\\_bernardin\\_lecture.shtm](http://www.archchicago.org/departments/ecumenical/cardinal_bernardin_lecture.shtm))

Title: ***Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue***

Address: N/A

Web: www.vatican.va/roman\_curia/pontifical\_councils/interelg

Description: "On Pentecost Sunday, 1964, Pope Paul VI instituted a special department of the Roman Curia for relations with the people of other religions. Known at first as the Secretariat for Non Christians, in 1988 it was renamed the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID).

The PCID is the central office of the Catholic Church for the promotion of interreligious dialogue in accordance with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, in particular the declaration "Nostra Aetate". It has the following responsibilities: 1) to promote mutual understanding, respect and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of other religious traditions; 2) to encourage the study of religions; 3) to promote the formation of persons dedicated to dialogue..."

".... A number of books and pamphlets have been published on different aspects of interreligious dialogue. The Council usually publishes the Acts of the dialogue meetings it organizes. A bulletin, called "Pro Dialogo", is published regularly three times a year, containing significant Church texts on dialogue, articles, and news of dialogue activities

throughout the world. An Interreligious Dialogue Directory has also been published.”

Source: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/interelg/documents/rc\\_pc\\_interelg\\_pro\\_20051996\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_pro_20051996_en.html)

Title: ***Community of Sant'Egidio***

Address: Comunità di Sant'Egidio  
Piazza S.Egidio 3/a  
00153 Roma

Contact: +39.06.585661, Fax +39. 06.5883625

Web: <http://www.santegidio.org/en>

Description: The Community of Sant'Egidio began in Rome in 1968, in the period following the Second Vatican Council. Today it is a movement of lay people and has more than 50,000 members, dedicated to evangelisation and charity, in Rome, Italy and in more than 70 countries throughout the world.

The Community of Sant'Egidio is a "Church public lay association". The different communities, spread throughout the world, share the same spirituality and principles which characterise the way of Sant'Egidio.

- Prayer, which is an essential part of the life of the community in Rome and communities throughout the world. Prayer is central to the overall direction of community life. Communicating the Gospel, the heart of the life of the Community, which extends to all those who seek and ask for a meaning for their life.
- Solidarity with the poor, lived as a voluntary and free service, in the evangelical spirit of a Church that is the "Church for all and particularly the poor" (Pope John XXIII)
- Ecumenism, lived as a friendship, prayer and search for unity among Christians of the whole world.
- Dialogue, recommended by Vatican II as a way of peace and co-operation among the religions, and also a way of life and as a means of resolving conflicts.

The Community has as its centre the Roman Church of Sant'Egidio, from which the Community takes its name. From its very beginnings, the Community has maintained, in the area of Trastevere and in Rome, a continuous presence of prayer and welcome for the poor and for pilgrims.

The inter-religious International Meetings started in the mid-80's, as an initiative of the Community of Sant'Egidio, with the aim of promoting mutual understanding and dialogue among religions, in a horizon of peace.

The Community of Sant'Egidio has continued living the spirit of the Assisi World Day of Prayer, proposed by John Paul II in 1986, by accepting the Pope's final invitation of that historical meeting: "Let's keep spreading the message of Peace and living the spirit of Assisi". Since that

moment, through a network of friendship between representatives of different faiths and cultures from more than 60 countries, the Community has promoted a pilgrimage of peace, that has had several stages in various European and Mediterranean cities year after year.

The two first meetings in Rome in 1987 and 1988, were followed by Warsaw in September 1989 (“War never again”) - on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of WWII -, Bari in 1990, Malta in 1991, Brussels in 1992 (“Europe, Religions, Peace”, about the unity of Europe and its relation with the South of the world). In 1993 the pilgrimage stopped in Milan and in the following years, in Assisi and Florence.

The 1995 meeting was a special one: it took place in Jerusalem, in the heart of the Holy City. The title was “Together in Jerusalem: Jews, Christians and Muslims”. After the Rome and Padua-Venice meetings, came the extraordinary meeting in Bucharest in 1988, “Peace is the name of God: God, Mankind, Peoples”. For the first time, the meeting was organized by the Community and the Orthodox Church of Romania.

The presence of several Orthodox patriarchs and cardinals, and mainly the new atmosphere of dialogue opened the way for the first visit of the Pope to an Orthodox country, which took place some months later. John Paul II, in the message he sent last year to the XIV Meeting for Peace, Community of Sant’Egidio in Lisbon, said: “I would like to thank especially the Community of Sant’Egidio for the enthusiasm and the spiritual courage shown in accepting the message of Assisi and bringing it to so many places in the world through the meeting of men of different religions.”

This year, the first year of the new century, the International Meeting for Peace takes place on the banks of the Mediterranean. Barcelona, deeply rooted in the history of co-existence among the great Abrahamic religions, but at the same time pointing to the new century, with its capacity of renewal, is for three days the capital of peace and the symbol of the new European reality.

Pope John Paul II writes in “Novo Millenio ineunte”: “... we face the challenge of inter-religious dialogue, to which we will be committed in the new century (...) Dialogue must go on”. To reaffirm in different languages and religious traditions the pacific power of dialogue, from 2nd to 4th of September in Barcelona, on the fifteenth anniversary of the first Meeting in Assisi, pilgrims of peace are going to live together “On the Frontiers of Dialogue: Religions and Civilization in the New Century”.

Source: <http://www.santegidio.org/en/ecumenismo/uer/index.htm>

## **Confucian**

Title: ***The Supreme Council for Confucian Religion in Indonesia***  
Address: Kompleks Royal Sunter Blok F 23,  
Jl. Danau Sunter Selatan, Jakarta Utara  
City : DKI Jakarta  
Contact: 6221-6509941  
Web: <http://matakin-indonesia.org/>  
Description: “Established in 1955, The Supreme Council for Confucian Religion in Indonesia (Majelis Tinggi Agama Konghucu Indonesia - MATAKIN) is a religious organization to promote the development of the teaching of Kongzi in Indonesia, and to accomplish prophet Kongzi's dream to make our world a better place to live with Peace and Harmony.” Actively involved in FKUB (Forum Komunikasi Umat Beragama/Forum of Interfaith Communication) and its activities in order to promote interfaith harmony, peace and tolerance in Indonesia.  
Held various religious ceremony of Confucianism such as: Chinese New Year, Day of Birth Prophet Kongzi (Khonghucu or Confucius), with all kinds of art-cultural entertainment, attended by President, Vice President and Ministers of Republic of Indonesia, Foreign Ambassadors, and other members of society.  
Participated and organized Interfaith dialogue, seminars of interfaith harmony, etc. in cooperation with other institutions such as Indonesian Conference of Religion and Peace (ICRP), Indonesian Committee of Religion and Peace (IComRP), FKUB (Forum Komunikasi Umat Beragama/Forum of Interfaith Communication), Paramadina University, Wahid Institute, Puan Amal Hayati Foundation, Dian-Interfidei, Society of Interfaith Dialogue (MADIA), Wadah Kerukunan Umat Beragama (WKUB).  
Source: [www.hrc.co.nz/hrc\\_new/hrc/cms/files/documents/25-May-2007\\_13-46-39\\_COUNTRY\\_REPORTS\\_TO\\_WAITANGIIFD.doc](http://www.hrc.co.nz/hrc_new/hrc/cms/files/documents/25-May-2007_13-46-39_COUNTRY_REPORTS_TO_WAITANGIIFD.doc)

## Hindu

Title: ***Dharma: Harvard's Hindu Student Association***

Address: N/A

Contact: rprasad@fas.harvard.edu

Web: <http://www.harvarddharma.org>

Description: Dharma: Harvard's Hindu Student Association was founded in 1997. "The purpose of Dharma is to provide a forum in which Harvard students can learn about and participate in the Hindu religion and the culture associated with it. Dharma should provide information about Hinduism, offer students an outlet to express their views on the Hindu religion and how it affects their lives, and be a springboard for any other Hinduism-related activities that its members might want to pursue."

Dharma Prayer Space: In Dharma's introduction to the Dharma prayer space, inaugurated in October 2006, it is stated that "this has unquestionably been the most important event in the history of Hinduism at Harvard. Indeed, this prayer space is unique even among universities throughout the United States, and we also hope that as the Hindu-American community continues to grow, institutions of education throughout the country will look upon this as a positive precedent for pluralistic cooperation and growth." Dharma has held several pujas in the prayer space, including the Sri Vishnu puja (fall 2006) and the Saraswati puja (spring 2007). Dharma holds regular events in the prayer space including: Weekly aartis on Sundays at 2 pm; Monthly morning meditations: 8:15 am, first Tuesday of each month.

According to Dharma's website, "the prayer space has seen constant use by Hindus and non-Hindus alike, for a variety of events....The prayer space also sees informal usage by Dharma members who just want a space to relax, do homework or socialize. Other groups like the Harvard College Women's Center and Buddhist groups frequent the prayer space for meditation....We hope both the Harvard community and outside organizations will contribute to the prayer space, both through your presence and any resources you can provide. We invite everyone on campus to enjoy the prayer space, and hope you will make use of it many times this coming semester."

Dharma forum on Hinduism and Buddhism: Cultural Exchanges in South Asia: According to the Dharma web site, a Dharma forum on "[Hinduism and Buddhism: Cultural Exchanges in South Asia](#)" was held on October 28, 2005. The objective of the dharma forum was to "focus on the exchanges between Hinduism and Buddhism, more specifically on how Buddhist teachings have impacted the Vedic tradition, and on how Hinduism after the rise of Buddhism is hugely different from the pre-Buddhist Vedic religion." Dharma's "discussion handouts" for guiding the discussion included questions such as, given that there are so many small communities within Hinduism that have survived just as the Buddhists have, is Buddhism any different from a Hindu sect today? If it is, why is it



even considered to be lost? How did Buddhism come to arise in India? How was it uprooted by “tyrannical Brahminism”?

Dharma forum on What does it mean to be a Hindu? Dharma’s debate on September 5, 2005 was lively and multifaceted, with many students coming up with extremely interesting ideas and proposals to answer the question. The first was to restrict the scope of the question to Hindu individuals in America, and most students agreed that being described as Hindu in America is primarily a social activity --- people need to visit temples and take part in Hindu cultural activities in order to be considered Hindu by others. At the same time, there was also the consensus that Hinduism, at a deeper and more philosophical level, is not so much about society as it is about each individual choosing that path that he or she is most comfortable with. Such paths could include devotion, rigorous self-study, or social service, or just about anything else that give the individual a sense of connectedness with the Cosmos.

*Swadharma* (Harvard’s Hinduism Journal): The official description of the *Swadharma* journal states that “*Swadharma* is a semi-annual publication dedicated to the presentation of Hinduism and Indian philosophy. *Swadharma* seeks to broaden the knowledge and understanding of Hinduism by serving as a medium of intellectual exchange between scholars, academics, and the global community. Blending scholarly articles, interviews, academic research, and editorials, the journal broadly examines views and perspectives on modern Hinduism with the goal to create better awareness and understanding of the tradition by Hindus and non-Hindus alike.”

The theme of the latest issue of the *Swadharma* (Volume II, May 2007) was “An American Hinduism: A Study in Diversity.” In this issue the “Letter from the Editors” writes that “Hinduism, the world’s third most practiced religion, is one of the world’s oldest continuous traditions, yet it is perhaps the least understood, especially in the Western world. *Swadharma* seeks to improve the knowledge and understanding of Hinduism among Hindus and non-Hindus; foster dialogue between scholars, academics, and students; and most importantly, raise awareness of a religion whose followers comprise more than 15% of the modern world population.”

Harvard Garba Team: Dharma states that “Harvard Garba Team provides students with an opportunity to learn, perform, and compete in garba and raas expositions at various on and off campus venues throughout the year, thereby fostering a stronger sense of Hindu culture and community on campus,” The Dharma web site reports that, “On Saturday February 25, 2006, the Harvard Garba Team made its debut performance at Cultural Rhythms, an annual cultural production of the Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations. With an audience of over 700 people and guest host Salma Hayek, the performance

at Cultural Rhythms marked the culmination of over 2 months of practice and choreography.”

Source: <http://www.harvarddharma.org/docs/forums/2.pdf>  
<http://www.harvarddharma.org/resources/swadharma/>

Title: ***Centre Vedantique of Geneva***

Address: 63 Av. d'Aïre  
CH-1203  
Geneva

Phone: +41-22-3407807

Contact: amarananda@bluewin.ch

Description: SWAMI Amarananda writes: We are doing a lot of things in the inter-religious domain: I was nominated, several years back, by Centre Vedantique of Geneva (a branch of the Order of Ramakrishna) to represent them in the Inter-religious Platform of Geneva. In my absence, another member of the Committee represent us. Total hours that we spend in periodic deliberations yearly, in the bosom of this platform, is about 30 hours. Moreover, as a part of that platform, I participate in the editing of the Hindu religious contents of the inter-religious calendar published yearly with the collaboration of ENBIRO, a local organisation of Biblical teaching, because I happen to be the only monk of Hindu origin in this country. The platform organises every year an inter-religious day open to all. Centre Vedantique also organises an open day yearly. We morally support and occasionally participate in various other inter-religious groups called the Arzillier of Lausanne, Créations pour la Paix of Geneva, Spiritual Appeal based in Geneva, and a few chaplainries (Geneva and Fribourg).

In our teachings, we highlight the convergence of views of mystics across different religious and cultural traditions. We harp upon the unicity of existence, which mystics have experienced, and of which a section of modern physicists have a glimpse. We tell people that a modern mind should develop the capacity of auto-criticism, that holy books contain many elements: universal truths, ancient and metaphysical speculations, superstitions prevalent in different cultures, a mix of history and mythology which is confounded often with true history. There is a need of sifting them.

The members of our association have their roots in different religions. None of them has been encouraged to change his/her religion. But they all accept Vedanta, as taught and lived by Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples. We entertain people from all traditions who come here to learn meditation. Both Protestant and Roman Catholic members are to be found on our committee. One of our ex-Vice-Presidents, though coming off a Christian family, was never baptised. A Muslim family usually takes charge of the carol during the Christmas festivity held in the premises of

Centre Vedantique. Two Buddhist families and a person belonging to the Druze community are counted among our members and close friends.

Swami Vivekananda, the consolidator of the Order of Ramakrishna, said: “I learnt from my master that religions are many, but the religion is one.” He defined that unique religion as the manifestation of the divinity (i.e. eternity, unboundedness, freedom in all respects etc.) latent in the human soul. If one scrutinises this Centre’s festivities, theatrical performances, other events and day-to-day life, one will find that we tend to rise above the affinity to a particular religious culture, because we believe in the truth enunciated by the said Swami : It is good to be born in a religion, but it is not good to die in it.

We accept all religions shorn of their dogmas. We refuse to admit that any given path is imperative for the whole humanity. By dogma, we mean, unverified and unverifiable metaphysical ideas, which one wishes that others should admit; there is invariably a heightened zeal and impatience associated with that wish of saving others’ souls. It is evident why we put in effort in things inter-religious, why we tell people to endeavour for a bit of religious experience which brings about inner transformation.

My experiences are as follows: There is a growing demand for the unique religion, which sometimes is given the appellation of spirituality, in a section of the population in different climes and cultures where education is not controlled. There are four major types of religion: Abrahamic religions, religions originating in Indian soil, a mix of Tao-Shinto-Confucianism- Buddhism, and Indigenous religions. Among each of the first three groups, there is optimally a mutual comprehension.

Among the religious in different religions, only a small minority exists, who understands that the diversity of religious traditions is something not simply to be tolerated, but to be adored. But the majority of the religious, who hold inter-religious events as a show of their openness, are not yet ready and competent for it, because their minds are full of dogmas. They employ the art of double talk—one type of preaching to their co-religionists, and another type, a platitudinous type, addressed to the congregation at inter-religious meets. I am not surprised, because if one goes by letters in holy books, one can hardly become genuinely open-minded.

Source: Provided by SWAMI Amarananda

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(+20)-8965-0671

Web: [www.hfb.org.uk](http://www.hfb.org.uk)

Description: The Hindu Forum of Britain's (HFB) "activities are broadly divided into three areas: public policy and community consultation for the government; capacity building and project development for the Hindu community; and developing good interfaith relations with other faith communities to build a cohesive and inclusive Britain. At the core of the Forum's activity is a strong belief in the richness and diversity of the Hindu culture, its value system that encompasses respect for all beings and faiths and a cultural heritage that facilitates community cohesion and coexistence."

Interfaith Relations and Community Cohesion: "HFB firmly believes that good relations between the faith communities in Britain will contribute to community cohesion and social inclusion, which are essential ingredients for peace and prosperity. HFB has established multilateral and bilateral dialogues with the umbrella bodies of the other faith communities and plays an active role in the Interfaith Network of the UK. HFB is also represented in the initial consultation on the new Commission for Integration and Cohesion announced by the Home Secretary. HFB has organised many special interfaith events involving different faith communities."

Project TEACH: The purpose of "project reach" is to create religious education (RE) or RE toolkits to teach Hinduism in schools efficiently. Our pilot project distributed our toolkit and resource pack to 74 schools in partnership with the London Borough of Harrow." According to a HFB report on religious education toolkit, "the Hindu Forum of Britain, in partnership with the London Borough of Harrow, is launching the country's first national Religious Education toolkit for teaching Hinduism in schools on 6th April 2006. The pilot project, which will initially see 72 schools of Harrow being presented official RE toolkits, will be expanded to include at least ten other Boroughs by the end of the year." With reference to one of the HFB productions, it is reported that "The RE toolkit entitled the Heart of Hinduism is a multi-media resource pack for teachers and students of RE to enable better understanding of Hinduism through GCSE-aligned books, posters, audio CDs, CD ROMs, websites and teacher training guides. The toolkit has been produced after considerable research and consultation with different sections and branches of the Hindu community in the UK."

Connecting British Hindus: In the preface to "connecting British Hindus: an inquiry into the Identity and Public engagement of Hindus in Britain," Ramesh Kallidai, Secretary General of HFB writes that "the Hindu community has now entered its second-generation status and is becoming integrated into the larger British society. The community is debating issues of identity and 'Britishness' with a view to playing a more active role in mainstream society. The community's diversity and the strength of its voluntary and community sectors continue to play a great

role in its successful integration and progressive cohesion. The sheer range of groups and organisations meeting social needs, from faith-based initiatives to campaigning groups contributes to the richness of civic life in this country and, are essential to the representation of a range of interests in local communities.” Further, the reports explains that “British Hindus form the third largest faith-based community in Britain yet we know remarkably little about them, their needs or experiences. This is for many reasons, some of them to do with a particular approach to the expression of the faith that many Hindus espouse, some of them due to a series of assumptions that are made about Hindus and their experiences. This gap in our knowledge and understanding has become harder to justify given the current prominence of political and policy discourses which have sought to include citizens' faith identities in the public realm.”

**Project SHIELD:** Decrease the incidence of hate crime against Hindus by training volunteers to secure Hindu temples and community centres, and a national campaign to encourage Hindu victims to report hate crime through a national helpline and third party reporting centres

**Project YES (Youth Engagement Services):** This project is collaboration between the Metropolitan Police Hindu Association, the Hindu Forum of Britain and ISKCON Educational Services. HFB will conduct training workshops and provide counselling services to persistent and potential Hindu offenders below the age of 18 in order to inculcate a moral fibre in their lives and bring them back to productive life within the communities. The scope of activities includes career counselling, chaplaincy, crime counselling, community activities, interactive workshops, and feedback. It will be managed by professional counsellors, Hindu chaplains and career development experts.

**Public Policy and Community Consultation:** “Some of the consultation exercises conducted by HFB include responses to the Home Office policy on race equality and diversity, the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, QCA and Religious Education Curriculum, Home Affairs Select Committee on Terrorism and Community Relations, Ministers of Religion from Abroad and others.”

**HFB promotes equity in Religious Education (9 July 2004):** The Hindu Forum of Britain (HFB) have asked the Department for Skills and Education and the Qualification Curriculum Authority (QCA) to bring equity to the core of Religious Education (RE), and how all major faiths are taught in our schools. A non-statutory national framework for religious education has been developed by the QCA following the publication of a QCA feasibility study in 2003 and a meeting between the Secretary of State and faith communities in October 2003. The new framework aims to clarify standards in religious education, promote high quality teaching and learning, and recognize the important contribution of the subject to pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Referring to the consultation exercise, Jay Jina, Education Secretary of the Hindu Forum of

Britain said, “The attempt by the DfES and the QCA to review the existing measures in Religious Education is to be applauded, however, the non-statutory framework falls short of what is really required for a coherent RE curriculum that encompasses and respects all faiths.” “We welcome the attention this consultation and framework gives to Religious Education in all our schools,” said Ramesh Kallidai, Secretary General of the Hindu Forum, adding “however, the core issue of equity still remains and one that must be addressed in line with the governments objective for an inclusive community programme.”

Source: <http://www.hfb.org.uk/Default.aspx?sID=15&cID=159&ctID=11&lID=0>

Title: ***Hinduism Today*** (Magazine)

Address: Hinduism Today  
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Kapaa, Hawaii 96746-9304  
USA

Contact: [letters@hindu.org](mailto:letters@hindu.org)  
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Web: <http://www.hinduismtoday.com>

Description: *Hinduism Today* was established in 1979. *Hinduism Today* strives “to foster Hindu solidarity as a unity in diversity among all sects and lineages; to inform and inspire Hindus worldwide and people interested in Hinduism; to dispel myths, illusions and misinformation about Hinduism; To protect, preserve and promote the sacred Vedas and the Hindu religion; to nurture and monitor the ongoing spiritual Hindu renaissance; to publish a resource for Hindu leaders and educators who promote Sanatana Dharma. *Hinduism Today* is published quarterly by Himalayan Academy, a nonprofit educational institution. According to the late Sri Ram Swarup, “*Hinduism Today* is international in thought and spiritual sensibility. It presents Hinduism's new global face.” In addition, Hindu Press International, a part of *Hinduism Today* is “a daily news summary for news media, educators, researchers, writers and religious leaders worldwide.

Hinduism Today’s Converge of Interfaith Concerns: Among the types of stories Hinduism Today might cover include writings such as “the interface, both positive and negative, between Hinduism and other faiths. Occasionally, we run feature pieces on Sikhism, Buddhism, Taoism, and other religions, with an effort to reveal links with Hindu history, knowledge or present-day concerns. The religious life of the indigenous tribals in India. The interface between Hinduism and science/technology; Hinduism in the 21st century.”

The Interfaith Focus of Hinduism Today’s Writers Guide: Hinduism Today’s “writers guide” states that “it is not necessary that

contributing writers be Hindu, but that they empathize with Hindu thought, practices and culture....Our interests range over timely events, human interest stories, profiles, interviews, trend analysis, social issues, lifestyle pieces, cultural explorations, travel-log and special feature reporting. We solely cover the spiritual, humanistic and cultural dimensions of Hinduism; we do not cover politics, with the exception of a political event that has a direct impact on Hindus or our faith.

Hinduism and modern life: "Hinduism and modern life," an article from the publisher's desk by Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami which appeared in the issue of *Hinduism Today* (April/May/June 2007) starts with the question, "does humanity's most enduring faith maintain its relevance amid the challenges of 21st-century life?" "In a world awash in wars and conflict of every kind, Hinduism's gentleness and noninjury by thought, word and deed is more than a relevance. It is a necessity for the future of humanity....The Hindu value that compliments and underlies the principle of nonviolence is that of tolerance. The Hindu belief that gives rise to tolerance of differences in race, religion and nationality is that all of mankind is good; we are all divine beings, souls created by God," says Veylanswami.

Vegetarianism and Meat-Eating in 8 Religions: "Vegetarianism and Meat-Eating in 8 Religions," an article by Jane Srivastava in *Hinduism Today's* issue of April/May/June 2007 states that "all religions of the world extol compassion, yet they vary in their commitment to expressing this virtue through nonviolence and vegetarianism. A growing number of today's vegetarians refrain from eating meat more for reasons pertaining to improved health, a cleaner environment and a better world economy than for religious concerns. Even those whose vegetarianism is inspired by compassion are oftentimes driven more by a sense of conscience than by theological principle." Srivastava explains this further, "it may be said with some degree of certainty that followers of Eastern religions--like Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism--generally agree in their support of nonviolence and a meatless lifestyle. But such a collective stance among followers of Western religions--like Judaism, Christianity and Islam--may not be asserted with the same confidence. Many deeply religious souls in the West eat meat because it is sanctioned in their holy books. Others refrain for a variety of reasons, including their sense of conscience that it is just not right, regardless of what scriptures say. Certainly, many scriptural references to food and diet are ambiguous at best."

Solidarity in Diversity: In an article from the publisher's desk of *Hinduism Today* (January/February/March, 2005) Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami writes about "solidarity in diversity." According to Veylanswami, Hindus the world over should work "with those of other traditions while holding firmly to our own denomination and spiritual path." Hindus the world over, while following unique and varied paths,

are united by their belief in karma, dharma, the all-pervasiveness of God, the sanctity of the Vedas, reincarnation, noninjuriousness, enlightenment, yoga, the illumined guru's centrality and the mysticism of worship. That is the basis for coming together to help one another and to reach out to the world.

Teaching Children to Forge a Peaceful Future: In *Hinduism Today* issue of July/August/September 2003 Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami talks about "Teaching Children to Forge a Peaceful Future." In this article Veylanswami says that we must "cultivate a prejudice-free consciousness that readily embraces differences in race, religion and nationality." In the second half of the twentieth century, Hindu concepts became more and more popular and influential in the West. Every year more Westerners take up the belief in karma and reincarnation as a logical explanation of what they observe in life. One of the most visible uses of Hindu values in the West in the 20th century was by Dr. Martin Luther King. After many years of thought, Dr. King selected the Hindu principle of ahimsa, as exemplified by Mahatma Gandhi's tactic of nonviolent resistance, to overcome the unjust laws of racial discrimination in the US. In 1959 Dr. King spent five weeks in India discussing with Gandhi's followers the Mahatma's philosophy and techniques of nonviolence to deepen his understanding before putting them into use.

Source: [http://www.hinduismtoday.com/archives/2007/4-6/18-32\\_veggie.shtml](http://www.hinduismtoday.com/archives/2007/4-6/18-32_veggie.shtml)

Title: ***Hindu Institute of Learning***

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(+416)-532-6262

Web: <http://www.hilwebsite.com>

Description: Founded in 1989 by Shri Jagdish Chander Sharda (Shastri Ji), the Hindu Institute of Learning (HIL) aims at "providing awareness and quality education in Indian Languages, Indian Arts and Indian Culture to the Multicultural World as One Family." HIL was established for the Propagation of Indian Languages, Arts and Culture in North America, the Institute conducts classes for adults and children to teach Indian Languages including Sanskrit; Fine Arts such as Music and Dance; Hindu Scriptures such as Gita, Ramayana and Upanishads; Hindu Cultural aspects such as Yoga, Meditation, Hindu Ethics; and Schools of Hindu Philosophy.



**The Sanskrit Study Circle:** The Sanskrit Study Circle is established to connect the scholars, students and lovers of the Sanskrit Language into an association, in order to create a dialogue among them, exchange ideas and information, and to promote Sanskrit language, literature and culture. The Sanskrit scholars, students and enthusiastic individuals and organizations world wide are invited to join the circle and call on other appropriate individuals to join in. Please add your name to our database by sending in your particulars or a short resume. The Circle holds a regular forum for scholarly dialogues on cultural and literary topics. The Toronto forum meets generally on the last Friday of the alternate month. The interesting one hour session starts at 7.30 pm. It includes a half-hour talk by an invited speaker, followed by 20 minutes of question and answer session. It concludes with a coffee break. The Sanskrit study forums in the past have included topics like "Knowledge and Ignorance," by Nana Saheb Datar, and "On the Aspects of Morality in Mahabharata," by Sitensu Chakravarti.

**Study of Hindi:** In an introduction about the HIT by Jim Walsh it is stated that "lot of non-Indians follow various spiritual paths and wish to be able to communicate with their teacher or guru who probably speaks and understands Hindi. Still others are interested in learning Indian music or dancing, and Hindi is the open channel through which such learning flows....With the world-wide opening up of travel in the last decades, a great many people now have married into Indian families and naturally want to communicate with their new relatives who may or may not speak English. For all of these reasons -and others besides- the study of Hindi is fast becoming an accepted subject in Canadian schools, alongside the more traditional European languages. This reflects the new world in which we all live, and the growing interest in Hindi -and the availability of instruction- promises us all a future and a culture far richer than we have yet known."

**HIT Courses:** Where can one learn Hindi? The Hindu Institute currently offers classes at all levels, in two locations, with two more locations to be added shortly. Credit courses will soon be offered that are affiliated with the University of Toronto, with York University, and with the District Board of Education of Toronto. HIT courses include Hindi, Sanskrit, Gita, Ramayana, Music (harmonium and tabla), classical dance, [Bharatnatyam and Garba Dance classes](#), Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi, Tamil, Gujarati English Pronunciation for Non-English Speaking People, Hindi Pronunciation for English Speaking People, Hinduism, and Philosophy of health and wellness.

**Pre-school program for children:** Very soon we will be starting a pre-school program for children. This day school aims at providing Ontario Standard Basic Education enhanced by optional courses in Indian languages, Indian arts and Indian culture. The center will provide a healthy vegetarian fresh food cooked on the premises. The food will be

stipulated with fresh fruits. A nuts-free environment will be maintained in accordance with the Metro Standard for the schools. There will be playing and recreational facilities for the children in order to encourage healthy mind and body of the children in a playful manner. Qualified and caring teachers and other staff will assure a high standard in the school. The main objective of this program will be to provide a quality service to our community.

Source: <http://www.hilwebsite.com/htmls/hil%20about%20us.html>  
<http://www.hilwebsite.com/htmls/hil%20ssc%20menu.html>

Title: ***The Hindu Council of Australia***

Address: The Hindu Council of Australia  
17 The Crescent, Homebush NSW 2140  
Australia

Contact: (02) 82504007

Web: <http://www.hinducouncil.com.au/index.html>

Description: The following statements are a selection from the fourteen objectives that have been presented by the Hindu Council of Australia (HCA): To articulate issues that concern Hindus at the local, state and national levels in Australia; to organize functions, festivals, etc; promoting Hindu culture and religion to foster cooperation among participating organizations; to arrange seminars, conventions, conferences etc to promote better understanding of Hindu culture and religion; to present a unified Hindu viewpoint on various current social issues relevant to the Australian multicultural society at conferences and in submissions to government institutions. According to the HCA web site, inter-faith activity “is one of the most important functions of the Hindu Council to represent the Hindu faith in the inter-faith meetings and to take part in the multicultural activities in Australia and the Australasia region. We have been increasingly involved in this activity.”

The World Conference of Religions for Peace (NSW) (7 September 2005): A meeting of the representatives of the Baha’I, Braham Kumaris, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim faiths was organised by the World Conference of Religions for Peace (NSW) at the Shalom College, University of NSW, Kensington, NSW. The topic for discussions was: “Reconciling with my faith being an Australian”. Mr Vijai Singhal attended the meeting on behalf of the Hindu community and presented his views on the topic, “Reconciling with my faith being an Australian.” Singhal presentation says: As Hindus we are taught to respect all religions. We bow down to the prophets of all religions. Our Scriptures tell us: Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti Truth is one, the wise call it by many names.

Regional Inter-faith Co-operation for Peace, Development and Dignity (Cebu, Philippines from 14-16 March 2006). Dr. A.

Balasubramaniam, Chairman of the Hindu Council of Australia was selected by the Hon Alexander Downer, Foreign Minister as the Hindu Delegate to represent Australia. The Conference was Held at the Shangre la Mactan Resort, Lapu-Lapu, Cebu, Philippines. Here is a statement from the conference declaration, “we will hold local, national, and regional forums to build knowledge, respect, and understanding and to provide opportunities for dialogue, thereby deepening relationships and friendships among faith communities and enhancing capacity for interfaith cooperation.”

The World Conference of Religions For Peace (8 March 2006): “A meeting of the representatives of various religious groups was held on 8 th March 2006 at the NSW State Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney. The host for the meeting was Hon. Andrew Tink MP. Mr Vijai Singhal represented the Hindu Council of Australia,” according to the HCA web site.

Community Harmony Reference Group (Ryde, 7 February 2006): According to the HCS report, “Mr Vijai Singhal attended the Multi-Faith Sub-Committee meeting on 7 Feb 2006 at the Argyle Centre, Ryde NSW. This Group organised a community Harmony festival on 11 March 2006 at Ryde Public School. The Group is planning to organise the International Day of Tolerance on 16 November 2006.”

Multicultural Group Discussions organized by the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs (13 July 2005): HCA reports that “the meeting was called by the Hon. John Cobb, Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs on 13 July 2005 at Level- 5, Gateway Building, and 26 Lee St. Sydney. Mr. Vijai Singhal attended the meeting to represent the Hindu Council of Australia.” The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the following issues: Australian Multiculturalism; Community support for cultural diversity; International and overseas conflict; Religious diversity and community harmony; Role of Media; Settlement of new arrivals; Economic participation; Social participation; Australia’s young people.

An Observance for Commonwealth Day 2006 in presence of Her Majesty The Queen (13 March 2006): “A special service was conducted on Monday, 13 March 2006 at St Andrew’s Cathedral, Sydney in observance for the Commonwealth Day 2006 in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh. Representing The Hindu Council, Mr Vijai Singhal attended the service and read one of the affirmations. The whole programme was televised by the ABC TV,” reports HCA’s web site.

Dialogue on Inter-faith Cooperation, Community Building and Harmony (Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 5-7 December 2004): The Chairman of the Hindu Council of Australia, Dr. A. Balasubramaniam attended this conference. The conference was jointly organised by the Australian and the Indonesian governments with the theme “Dialogue on Interfaith

Cooperation: Community Building and Harmony”. /the objectives of the conference were as follows: To build a harmonious relationship among all followers of different faiths and religions in the region through promoting confidence and trust. To foster mutual understanding and respect between Islam, as the prominent religion in Indonesia, and other faiths and religions. To engage all faiths and religious groups in developing an inclusive conceptual proposal to bridge differences and find specific common grounds for practical cooperation.

Women’s Inter-faith Network Meetings: This group meets every month. Mrs Saroj Arora and Mrs Kanta Lamba attend the meetings on behalf of the Hindu Council.

Newsletter coverage of interfaith activities: The HCA’s newsletter of April-June 2007) carries brief article reports such as “Australian Students Get Taste of Hinduism,” and “Japan’s Hindu Linkages Still Alive.” In the same newsletter an article titled “Holi, The Festival of Colours” reports that “in a joint celebration of Holi and the Year of the Pig, Indians and Chinese in Sydney got together in a concert featuring classical Indian dances and Chinese traditional music inspired by the symbolism of the lotus and the phoenix.”

Source: [http://www.hinducouncil.com.au/interfaith\\_activities.html](http://www.hinducouncil.com.au/interfaith_activities.html)

Title: ***Hindu American Foundation***

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Web: <http://www.hinduamericanfoundation.org/>

Description: The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) is a human rights group whose purpose is to provide a voice for the 2 million strong Hindu American community. HAF interacts with and educates government, media, think tanks, academia and public fora about Hinduism and issues of concern to Hindus locally and globally. Promoting the Hindu and American ideals of understanding, tolerance and pluralism, HAF stands strong against hate, discrimination, defamation and terror.

The Hindu American Foundation is not affiliated with any religious or political organizations or entities. HAF seeks to serve Hindu Americans across all sampradayas (Hindu religious traditions).

Source: <http://www.hinduamericanfoundation.org/about.htm>

Title: ***Hindu Council UK***

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Description: Hindu Council UK was founded in 1994 for all Hindus domiciled in the United Kingdom, combining all the Hindu faith denominations, whilst representing various Hindu communities and Hindus from different parts of the world settled in the United Kingdom. It's main purpose was to give the UK Hindus an effective voice on policy matters with the Government of the day whilst enhancing mutual understanding among the major faiths predominant in the UK. Hindu Council UK is itself a non-partisan faith organisation.

The work that the Hindu Council UK undertakes falls into two separate but connected categories, viz: the interfaith commitment through the Inter Faith Network of the UK and the review of policies affecting Hindus through a consultation process with the Government of the day.

Interfaith Network

There are various dialogues among different faiths that occur continuously throughout the year by way of

- Leaders of all major faiths meet centrally at the Inter Faith Network regularly throughout the year, and
- Local level inter-dialogue meetings are held throughout the country to promote mutual understanding for a harmonious co-existence.

Government Consultation

Along with other major faith councils, Hindu Council UK is invited to consult on Government policy from time to time . The consultation processes take place in agreement with the Inter Faith Network and Hindu Council UK input and feedback from a Hindu point of view. Various Government departments are involved, particularly the Home Office and Department of Trade and Industry. In addition Hindu Council UK is represented at other government related bodies like the Commission for Racial Equality and the new Single Equality Board.

Affiliates

Hindu Council UK represents an amalgamation of various Hindu denominations in the UK through their temple bodies and cultural organisations. In addition community, youth and women organisations are represented.

Source: <http://www.hinducounciluk.org/newsite/aboutus.asp>

## Indigenous

Title: ***Morung for Indigenous Affairs & JustPeace***

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Dimapur Nagaland-797112  
India

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Description: Morung for Indigenous Affairs & JustPeace is instituted to enable cross-sections of people to share, exchange and create ideas towards a shared common vision founded on the realization of human dignity. 'JustPeace' refers to a new vision which derives its belief on the idea that true and lasting peace cannot exist without justice. In reality there is no road that leads to peace, Peace itself is the road; and it begins to emerge

only when all forms of injustices that destroy human dignity are removed. Some of the objectives of the Morung are: To secure our cultures, languages, spirituality, music, art and worldviews that constitute the richness of Naga existence, whereby asserting its continued survival and development. To initiate activities that will in respectful ways promote and develop our natural resources, bio-diversity, traditional medicine and transmission of indigenous knowledge and value systems. To participate in the praxis of supporting and asserting indigenous values and methods of addressing issues of conflict and reconciliation that will lead to JustPeace.

Source: <http://www.morungexpress.com/MissionStatement.htm>

Title: ***The Center for World Indigenous Studies***

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Contact: +1(360)586-0656

Web: <http://www.cwis.org>

Description: Established in 1984, the Center for World Indigenous Studies (CWIS) is an independent research and education organization dedicated to wider understanding and appreciation of the ideas and knowledge of indigenous peoples and the social, economic and political realities of indigenous nations. The Center fosters better understanding between peoples through the publication and distribution of literature written and voiced by leading contributors from Fourth World Nations. An important goal of CWIS is to establish cooperation between nations and to democratize international relations between nations and between nations and states.

The Fourth Word Eye (FWE): FWE is an online “ezine,” a daily journal published by the Center for World Indigenous Studies (CWIS) since June 1999. FWE offers our readers insightful opinion and comments on the events of the day in the Fourth World and in the world unavailable elsewhere.

The Fourth World Journal (FWJ): FWJ is the world's leading publication for ideas and analysis about and by writers from some of the world's more than six thousand Fourth World nations. Leading activists and scholars contribute lively and informative articles and essays found nowhere else. FWJ is a publication truly without peers. Contributors to FWJ reveal what otherwise remains hidden in other publications. FWJ delivers to the reader analysis, ideas and thorough scholarship that explains world events or activities in your backyard that may touch on the environment, political change, history, economics, social change, or the

creative arts, what matters in your life and the life of people you care about.

The Fourth World Institute offers advanced studies in government, geopolitics, history, philosophy, culture and the environment from the perspective of Fourth World peoples. The Institute offers individual seminars, graduate level studies and professional development in Fourth World Studies with an opportunity to earn a Certificate, or using work done at the CWIS Fourth World Institute to earn a Master of Arts degree upon successful enrollment at a collaborating institution. The purpose of the CWIS Fourth World Institute is to provide learning and research opportunities for academic, professional, spiritual and community activist leaders world-wide. We prepare leaders for the 21st century through a combination of on-site learning, independent learning, and on-line learning. Enrolled students, professionals and academics gain access to scholars from around the world.

Source: <http://www.cwis.org/fwj/index.htm>

Title: ***National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission***

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(02) 9299 2215

Web: [http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/about\\_natsiec](http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/about_natsiec)

Description: The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC) is the peak ecumenical Indigenous body in Australia. It is part of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA). With NATSIEC's guidance, the churches are working together for a fair deal for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and for the healing of our nation. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission shall: Provide a forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to speak and take action on issues of faith, mission and evangelism; of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spirituality and theology; of social justice and land rights. Serve as a unified voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as they relate to member churches and international ecumenical bodies. Help rebuild self-esteem, pride and dignity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Promote harmony, justice and understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider community. Provide a basis for further political action by church-related Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and the member churches of the National



Council of Churches in Australia. Administer all funds of the National Council of Churches in Australia relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Share in furthering the objectives and promoting the programmes of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

Continuing the Journey (Report into the Churches' response to the Reconciliation process and the Bringing Them Home Report) With the integration of the National Missionary Society into the Australian Council of Churches the commitment to advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights continued. In 1965 the Australian Council of Churches launched a major policy document The Land Rights of Australian Aborigines. This document affirmed the special relationship of Aboriginal people with land, argued for the recognition of rights to land in places where Aboriginal people were still living on their land and called for a National Aboriginal Capital Fund as a measure of reparation for dispossession. The document initiated a campaign which the ACC took to all state governments and parliamentarians, the media and the church assemblies and synods. In addition to advancing the notion of land rights, the ACC supported the struggles of Aboriginal people around Australia for justice including the setting up of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra.

Christ and culture indigenous theology conference July 2007: The Christ and Culture conference is a national Indigenous theology and spirituality conference organized by NATSIEC. In keeping with the aims of the NATSIEC theology project the conference program will seek to celebrate and encourage further development of Australian Indigenous theology and spirituality.

Source: [http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/resources/reportspolicy\\_statements](http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/resources/reportspolicy_statements)

Title: ***World Federation of Dalit and Tribal Rights***

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Munirka, New Delhi-110 067  
India

Contact: [mpranal@rediffmail.com](mailto:mpranal@rediffmail.com)  
(+11)-26196300

Web: <http://www.wfdtrindia.org>

Description: The aims and objectives World Federation of Dalit and Tribal Rights (WFDTR) are: To sensitize people in the matter of discrimination with Dalits and Tribals due to their descent. Supporting and strengthening people's movements in India and abroad towards eliminating all forms of discrimination. To dialogue with the government for the implementation of rights of Dalits and Tribals enshrined in Constitution. Networking with like-minded people and organizations in India and abroad to attain the

goal. Building local, national and international alliances to fight against discrimination and injustice. In this process, the Federation organize annual [World Conference](#) under the banner of “World Federation of Dalit and Tribal Rights (WFDTR).”

WFDTR world conference: The major aims also address following concerns: To pressurize Indian Government to resume Agriculture Census to update the records related to land ownership. To secure co-ownership of women in general and Dalit women in particular in existing assets including land at one stroke by Act. To constitute Fast Track Courts to dispose land related cases pending against Dalits and Tribals in several courts across the country. Lobbying and advocacy with state governments to update land records showing the status of surplus land with the state. Pad Yatras (March on Foot), Cycle Yatras (Cycle March), meetings and rallies to spread awareness among the masses towards elimination of caste based occupation and discriminations. To ensure that Union and State Governments provide representation of Dalits and Tribals in every decision making body.

World Conference on “Caste, Ethnicity and Occupation Based Discriminations,” October 2006: Papers are invited on the following themes for the World Conference: National and International Perspective: Caste/Descendent based discriminations; Ethnicity and Discriminations; Discrimination with Indigenous People around the World; Occupation based discrimination; Culture and discriminations; Rethinking History/History of the Oppressed; The relevance of 2005 years of Mahaparinirvana of Gautam Buddha; Dalit & Tribal Social Reformers-Social, Political and Economic.

Source: <http://www.wfdtrindia.org/folder.2006-07-19.0617773800/>

Title: ***The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies***

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GPO Box 553, Canberra ACT 2601  
Australia

Contact: (+61) 2 6246 1111

Web: <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au>

Description: The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) is the world’s premier institution for information and research about the cultures and lifestyles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our Vision is, “Worldwide knowledge and understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures, past and present.” The functions of the Institute are: to undertake and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies; to publish the results of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies and to assist in the publication of the results of such studies; to conduct research in fields relevant to Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander studies and to encourage other persons or bodies to conduct such research; to assist in training persons, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, as research workers in fields relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies; to establish and maintain a cultural resource collection consisting of materials relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies; and to encourage understanding, in the general community of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies.

*Australian Aboriginal Studies (AAS)* is inter-disciplinary journal promoting high-quality research in Australian Indigenous studies with a focus on the humanities and social sciences. It is published for a wide audience and visual content is encouraged. Each issue contains several scholarly articles, accompanied by research reports, book reviews and news and information.

NAIDOC on the Peninsula 2007 (by Danika Nayna, AIATSIS Media and Communications): AIATSIS marked NAIDOC week by hosting a free, public event on Tuesday the 10<sup>th</sup> of July. The outdoor event saw over 700 people gather on Acton Peninsula for a day of fun, food and entertainment. Although it was still quite cold, the sun shone upon a successful day of celebrating our Indigenous heritage, culture and peoples. Keeping true to this year's NAIDOC theme, *Looking Forward, Looking Back*, NAIDOC on the Peninsula showcased both traditional and contemporary musical entertainment and markets. The AIATSIS drummers, a group of percussionists made up of AVA technicians, kicked off the entertainment with some attention grabbing rhythms.

Stanner awards: Congratulations to the authors of the three books shortlisted for the 2007 Stanner Award: Rob Riley: an Aboriginal leader's quest for justice by Quentin Beresford (Aboriginal Studies Press); Shimmering screens: making media in an Aboriginal community, by Jennifer Deger (University of Minnesota Press); No free kicks: family, community and football: a Noongar story, by Eric Hedley Hayward (Fremantle Arts Centre Press).

Source: [http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/news/stanner\\_award](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/news/stanner_award)

Title: ***Tribal Link***

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Contact: (212) 564-3329

Web: [www.tribal-link.org](http://www.tribal-link.org)

Description: Founded in 1993, "Tribal Link Foundation, Inc. is a communications network linking indigenous peoples to information, media, resources and relevant networks, with a special focus on the United Nations system. Tribal Link provides outreach to the public regarding

indigenous peoples and their issues, emphasizing the significance of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.”

Community Commons (Fordham University, New York, June 2005): In partnership with the United Nations Development Programme's Equator Initiative, Tribal Link sponsored the Community Commons dialogue space at Fordham University in New York. The Community Commons was a gathering of grassroots leaders who have pioneered innovative livelihood, natural resource management, and other community development strategies and approaches. P

Dialogue for the Future: Indigenous Peoples and the Wharton Business School Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, United Nations, May 2005. This meeting, organized with Aveda Inc., endeavored to start a dialogue between the larger business community and indigenous peoples, who are in the daily business of living in balance with and protecting the last undisturbed areas of the planet. This long-overdue meeting was highly successful with representatives of Wharton, Aveda and indigenous peoples pledging to do all they can to heal our planet.

The Sacred Place, Ubuntu Village: The World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, August 26 - September 4, 2002. The Sacred Place was created by Tribal Link in collaboration with the Johannesburg World Summit Company (JOWSCO). This sacred site was provided to enable groups to manifest the vital contribution of the spiritual dimension to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Surrounded by a large open area for sacred ceremonies and rituals, Tribal Link Foundation helped to create a tribal link of indigenous dwellings that was used for quiet reflection, meditation, prayer and other sacred activities.

Collaborations with the American Museum of Natural History: By collaborating with the American Museum of Natural History, Tribal Link has been able to reach out to an extremely broad audience with important information about two issues: genomic research and racial stereotypes. Each event has approximately 300 people in attendance. On May 12, 2002, Tribal Link helped to organize the panel Indigenous Peoples Images in Sports and Media. May 26, 2002, Tribal Link helped to coordinate a panel entitled Indigenous Peoples in Our Image. Media exploitation, religious intolerance, degrading mascots and corporate logos and their impact were examined.

Traditional Knowledge, Intellectual Property and Indigenous Culture Cardozo School of Law-Yeshiva University, February 21-22, 2002: Tribal Link co-sponsored this event on February 21-22, 2002 in collaboration with the Cardozo School of Law-Yeshiva University. Executive Director Pamela Kraft spoke on the role of NGOs in supporting indigenous peoples' preservation of indigenous knowledge. This event was attended by approximately 350 people.

Title: ***Maavalla Koda***  
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50002 Tartu Estonia  
Contact: [koda@maavald.ee](mailto:koda@maavald.ee)  
Web: [www.maavald.ee](http://www.maavald.ee)  
Description:

Taarausuliste ja Maausuliste (1) Maavalla (2) Koda (Estonian House of Taara and Native Religions; hereafter Maavalla Koda) embodies in itself four Houses of believers in indigenous religions. Two religions are represented in Maavalla Koda: Taara religion, created in 1930s and Estonian indigenous religion - nature worship. The aim of Maavalla Koda is to provide prerequisites for the maintenance and development of the indigenous religion and culture, following its creed and customs.

Roundtable of Estonian Religious Organisations: In 2001 Maavalla Koda together with Estonian Buddhist Congregation /Drikung Kagyu Ratna Shri Centre, Tibetan Buddhism Nyingma Estonian Congregation, Estonian Muslim Congregation and Tallinn Baha'i Congregation founded the Roundtable of Estonian Religious Organizations. The aim of the Roundtable of Estonian Religious Organizations is to contribute to the development of religious tolerance and religious freedom in Estonia. In the recent years Roundtable of Estonian Religious Organizations has made efforts to establish a dialogue with the Estonian government to warrant the separation of the church and the state prescribed in the Estonian constitution.

Uralic Communion: In relations with other religions the sequence of preferences for Maavalla Koda is following: nature worship of the Uralic peoples, nature worship of other peoples, ancient indigenous religions, new ethnic nature religions, world religions. In 2001 Maavalla Koda together with the representatives of Finnish (Suomen kansanuskon yhdistys ry.), Mari (Osh mari Chi mari and Sorta) and Erzya indigenous religions founded the Uralic Communion. The aim of the Uralic Communion is to establish contacts between different indigenous religions and to contribute to the maintenance and strengthening of these religions.

Research of the Traditional Culture and Religion: Maavalla Koda organizes the research, introduction and evaluation of the traditional culture. We have in Estonia a strong tradition of folklore research but it is based on the Western-Christian worldview. Thus Koda has to organize the research and interpretation of the indigenous tradition based on the indigenous worldview. For example, Koda is currently making preparations for a general and complex survey of ancient indigenous shrines (sacred groves, holy springs, sacred trees, stones, etc.).

Indigenous People and the State: We can freely develop as the indigenous people only when the Estonian legislation recognizes

indigenous values and customs. Thus one of the tasks of Maavalla Koda is to represent the religious interests of the indigenous people in the relations with the state. Unfortunately the Estonian legislation still follows the examples culturally alien or even hostile to us. For example, the Estonian Republic does not recognize our indigenous shrines as sacred places, forbids the following of the indigenous funeral rites, does not warrant the peace of grave of our ancestors, etc.

Indigenous education: Special attention in Maavalla Koda is paid to the educational life in Estonia. Koda, together with other non-Christian religious organizations has opposed actively the introduction of the compulsory religious instruction in comprehensive schools. Koda has also emphasized that the present curriculum of the Estonian schools does not pay sufficient attention to the traditional culture and religion and treats it inadequately.

Source: <http://www.maavald.ee/eng/uudised.html?rubriik=&id=251&op=lugu>

Title: ***Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities***

Phone: (+977)-1-5555054

Web: <http://nefin.org.np>

Description: Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) is an autonomous and politically non-partisan, national level common organization. NEFIN currently consists of 54 indigenous member organizations widely distributed throughout the Terai, Hills and Himalayas of Nepal. The mission of NEFIN is to acquire social equality and justice for Indigenous Nationalities by preserving their distinct social, political, cultural and linguistic identities and by promoting their representation in very aspect of national life. Our objectives are: to play an active role in development by uniting the Indigenous Nationalities and promoting fraternity among them; to formulate common policies and develop leadership for Indigenous Nationalities by coordinating with their organizations; to assist organizations of Indigenous Nationalities in capacity building; to facilitate in the development of language, literature, script, religion, culture and education of Indigenous Nationalities and assist in the preservation and promotion of their rights; to promote international fraternity by demonstration solidarity against discriminations based on race, origin, ethnicity, language, religion and gender.

International Day of Indigenous People observed (10 August 2007): The fifteenth International Day of Indigenous People has been observed in the country by holding various programmes. While various ethnic groups took out rallies in the capital demanding right to indigenous people and calling for meaningful Constituent Assembly elections, the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) organised the major celebrations in Butwal in western Nepal. Addressing the

celebrations in Butwal, Ian Martin, chief of UNMIN and Special Representative of UN Secretary General, expressed satisfaction over the recently sealed deal between the government and indigenous community. "This year's International Day of the World's Indigenous People has particular resonance in Nepal, with the dialogue between Janajati representatives and the Government resulting in a positive outcome this week," he said. Terming the agreement as a major step for Nepal's indigenous peoples, Martin said, "It also highlights the need for continuing dialogue to ensure that there is consensus on the electoral system with Madhesis, Dalits and other traditionally marginalised groups. This will contribute to achieving the ultimate goal of the election: to produce a Constituent Assembly that is truly representative and able to frame a constitution which responds to the aspirations of all Nepalese people."

Meeting with Nobel laureate Jimmy Carter: On June 14, 2007 NEFIN's Chairperson Pasang Sherpa and senior adviser Dr Om Gurung met former Nobel laureate and former US President Jimmy Carter and discussed on political and electoral situation in Nepal. During the meeting they also discussed about ethnic issues raised by NEFIN.

Govt-NEFIN seal much-awaited deal (7 August 2007) : After ten rounds of negotiations, the government and the National Federation of the Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) struck a 20-point deal on Tuesday. The agreement reached in the talks held in Godavari, Lalitpur, includes constitutionally guarantee of at least one seat to each indigenous group in the constituent assembly, NEFIN talks coordinator Dr Om Gurung said. The government side also agreed to make the CA inclusive by ensuring proper representation of all sections of the society including ethnic groups. There was also an understanding to consider ethnicity, religion and geographical situations while restructuring the state.

Source: <http://nefin.org.np/content/view/223/1/>

Title: ***The Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee***

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Contact: [ipacc@iafrica.com](mailto:ipacc@iafrica.com)  
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Web: <http://www.ipacc.org.za>

Description: The Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee (IPACC) is a network of 150 indigenous peoples' organisations in 20 African countries. IPACC's purpose is to co-ordinate African indigenous peoples' advocacy strategy and activities. IPACC's main aims include: Promote recognition of and respect for indigenous peoples in Africa; Promote participation of indigenous African peoples in United Nations' events and other international forums; Strengthen leadership and



organisational capacity of indigenous civil society in Africa in particular strengthening subregional networks of indigenous peoples. IPACC works in partnership with the Technical Centre for Agricultural Cooperation with Rural Areas (CTA EU-ACP); Cybertracker Foundation; African Biodiversity Network; Indigenous Information Network and UNESCO's working group on Education for Sustainable Development.

IPACC members join lobby efforts for Declaration in New York (16 August 2007): IPACC members are currently joining the Indigenous Peoples' Caucus in New York to approach government missions about the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. IPACC and the Indigenous Peoples' Caucus are exchanging views on the Declaration with the governments and ultimately pressing that the Declaration is good for indigenous peoples and good for Africa. IPACC members will meet with many government officials in these critical weeks leading up to the expected September vote. Especially given the role of Africa in stalling adoption of the Declaration last November, IPACC members are playing an important part of dialogue-ing to hear African states' concerns. IPACC members are working alongside the Indigenous Peoples Caucus to speak to both African and other states to ensure that a suitable solution is reached on the Declaration before the end of the current session of the General Assembly.

South Africa indigenous leaders gather in Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park to discuss CBD (17 August 2007): As the anglophone African meeting of State Parties reviewing their Programmes of Work concludes in Cape Town, indigenous leaders are gathering in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park on the borders of Namibia and Botswana to study the Convention on Biological Diversity and its articles on traditional knowledge and protected areas. Lucy Mulenkei of Indigenous Information Network is cooperating with IPACC to run an orientation workshop with leaders of the =Khomani, !Xun, Khwe San, Nama and Griqua communities affected by National Parks and Protected Areas. The event takes place in one of South Africa's largest national parks that was subject to a landclaim in 1999 by the =Khomani who had been forcibly expelled during apartheid. The workshop will deal with the CBD and 8J, and provide feedback and discussion on IPACC's Bujumbura Plan of Action on the Environment and Natural Resources, and the Tsumkwe Regional Workshop on the Formalisation of the Traditional Knowledge of Tracking.

Other IPACC events: 19 Aug: IPACC workshop with indigenous women: The workshop will provide training for indigenous women in the CBD process and actions needed. Upington, (date to be confirmed); 24 Aug - 25 Aug: Kuru San Traditional Dance Festival 2007 Including San dance groups from Ghanzi district, Ngamiland, South Africa and Namibia, at Qare Game Farm, 20 Km from Ghanzi on the road to D'Kar and Maun, Botswana

Source: [http://www.ipacc.org.za/eng/news\\_details.asp?NID=96](http://www.ipacc.org.za/eng/news_details.asp?NID=96)



Title: ***The Mindanao Interfaith People's Conference***

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Davao City 8000  
Philippines

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Web: <http://www.davaonews.com>

Description: The Mindanao Interfaith People's Conference (MIPC) grew from the seeds sown by the Mindanao Catholic bishops who founded the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference (MSPC) in 1971. MIPC was born in 1983 in response to the demand for an interfaith approach to the realities and problems in Mindanao as an independent conference of three faiths in Mindanao (lowland Christian settlers, Moro and Indigenous Peoples) that basically addressed issues such as genuine development, justice and peace. MIPC is officially registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission as Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation, Incorporated. MIPC's mission is to serve the Mindanao's tri-people of Indigenous People's (IPs), Moro and Christian settlers' communities through various forms of communications critically conscious of the interfaith dimension of social development work.

MIPC's collaborative and coordinative efforts: Study on the situation of children in Davao City: Specifically, it was a great opportunity to be the Team Leader of the Technical Working Group that conducted the study on the situation of children in Davao City that favorably defined the legislative measure for children, now known as the Davao City Children's Welfare Code per City Ordinance enacted in 1994, according to report by Mae Fe Ancheta-Templa, Executive Director of MIPC.

Interfaith work during 1988 to 1994 religious and political armed-conflict: In 1988 to 1994, a large number of communities affected by the political armed-conflict in Mindanao occurred. Children's vulnerabilities were glaringly hit and that pushed me to serve the children through the installation of Children's Rehabilitation Center's Mindanao community outreach program for the internal refugee's children and other children-survivors of armed-conflict using a psychosocial approach to their problems and rights violations. Privilege as it may seem, to be at the current leadership of a big interfaith network of people's organizations in Mindanao, the Mindanao Interfaith People's Conference. MIPC is one of the oldest institutions that maintain at least two hundred village and municipal level community organizations primarily in Southern Mindanao both for specific advocacy-campaigns and tangible self-help projects. Being in this institution allows me to mainstream not only gender and women perspective, but child rights framework as well.

The Nordic Mindanao Connection: The Nordic Mindanao Connection is an attempt to help some very brave women in Davao City in their struggle for development, justice and peace in Mindanao. The initiative taker, Eldar Einarson, met Marlene and Leif Lembäck in Davao City in June 2004, and they decided to create a website where organizations for peace in Mindanao could present some of their projects for social development and justice. The reason was that "The Mindanao Interfaith Peoples Conference" MIPC, didn't have enough money to pay the internet fee for their website, and also had problems maintaining it. Archbishop Orlando B. Quevedos article: "Injustice - The root of conflict in Mindanao" convinced Einarson that a solving of the Muslim - Christian conflict in Mindanao, would be a great inspiration for solving similar conflicts in other parts of the world, and an effective weapon in the war against terror.

Source: <http://www.davaonews.com/TheStruggle.htm>

Title: *Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat*

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Description: Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat (IPS) is a support secretariat for the International Indigenous Peoples' Organisations that are Permanent Participants to the Arctic Council. IPS work includes: Ensuring that Permanent Participants are sent documents and reports connected to the work of the Arctic Council and its working groups; to help permanent participants to present their views to the Arctic Council and its working groups; collecting and communicating information about the Arctic Council and its results to the Indigenous Peoples in the various parts of the Arctic; providing co-ordination for the Indigenous Peoples' Organizations to meet with each other, and to participate in the Arctic Council Working Groups.

Indigenous Peoples at the Arctic Council: A New Form of International Cooperation: The Arctic Council is an intergovernmental forum established by the states whose borders cross the Arctic Circle — Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Russian Federation and the United States. It is a unique model for co-operation among national governments and Indigenous Peoples. Six organizations representing Arctic Indigenous Peoples have the status of Permanent Participants and maintain an equal footing with governments in the work of the Arctic Council. Indigenous Peoples influence the priorities and

programs of the Arctic Council, recognizing our place in the international decision-making that affects our homes.

[Arctic Leaders Enlighten US Senate](#): According to a report by Clive Tesar, the Arctic Leaders have been visiting Senators' offices in Washington DC, for the past three days to persuade the Senators to back urgent action on climate change. The Leaders have stressed that they are not backing any particular Bill, or any particular US political party, but simply want to see the United States take any action that will start to stabilize temperatures in the Arctic. The Arctic Leaders' message has mostly been well received by senators and their staff, both democrats and Republicans, "we must accept that climate change is real, said Senator Mark Pryor after meeting with the Arctic Leaders. We are trying to build consensus on what to do, although that may take us a couple of years."

[American Indigenous Peoples Share Stories of Climate Change](#): Clive Tesar reports that Arctic leaders touring the United States with their eyewitness messages of climate change shared their stories with local Indigenous Peoples yesterday. The exchange came during a tour stop in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The audience at a public meeting in a Presbyterian church included local Anishnabe people, and also some descendants of Saami people who had come to hear Saami Council Vice President Olav Mathis Eira.

The International Polar Year (IPY): The IPY that is officially launched this spring will involve many different projects that promise to focus on including stakeholders and their priorities. With this growing interest in stakeholders (residents, groups and local industries who will be affected by environmental changes in a study locale), it is important that terms such as 'community involvement' or 'stakeholder' do not become buzz-words thrown into research proposals out of convention, to appear relevant, or as a means to get funding. Stakeholder involvement cannot be taken lightly.

Source: <http://www.arcticpeoples.org/about/>

Title: ***Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact Foundation***

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Thailand

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Web: <http://www.aippfoundation.org>

Description: Established in 1988 the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact Foundation's (AIPP) aims and objectives are: To serve as a forum for sharing aspirations, ideas and experiences, consolidating cooperation and

solidarity and coordination and organizing campaigns on issues affecting indigenous peoples in Asia; to encourage community reflection and action to ensure peace and security for the future of indigenous peoples in Asia; to develop research program and systematic documentation of the various issues and aspects of indigenous peoples lives and to publish and disseminate them; to advocate the cause of indigenous peoples and co-ordinate with other organizations and movements for the realization of the aspirations of indigenous peoples of Asia.

AIPP Youth dialogue: Young people are the segment within indigenous societies who are profoundly affected by erosion of traditional indigenous way of life, economic change, unemployment, globalization and a number of other factors. Within all these changes there is a perception among indigenous youths that their concerns and needs are not always reflected in policies conceived by their elders and also that the traditional institutions are becoming redundant. It has therefore become very imperative to facilitate a process of dialogue between the elders and the youths of indigenous societies. Such a dialogue would seek to: Make the experiences and knowledge of indigenous elders accessible to the youths and vice versa. Find meeting ground between traditional and non-traditional systems that is holistic in its approach to indigenous development and change. Dwell on the impact of globalization on the intergenerational transfer of indigenous social and environmental knowledge. Make youths reflect and act upon long-term social and economic development in an indigenous framework within militarized situations.

Philippine Youth-Elders Dialogue Cum Youth Jam: On March 3-6, 2006 the event was held at the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) Hall of the Benguet State University, La Trinidad Benguet. A Dialogue with Indigenous Elders and Government Officials: On March 6, the whole day was allotted to forum-workshops with the elders. At least ten (10) elders came for a round table dialogue. This was characterized by sharing of views and experiences between the youth and indigenous elders. Topics ranging from cultural heritage campaign vis-à-vis widespread tourism projects and developmental aggression, the impacts of tribal wars on the youth and communities, the current political and economic situation, the impacts of globalization on IP, and the ongoing militarization in the countryside. The elders left us with the question, “as youth, what can you do for your generation and for the future?”

San Youth Dialogue: First Youth Dialogue: August 26, 2006 at Chang Phuek Hotel, 14 Participants. The first dialogue was an active discussion along with active participation of attendees. The main topic on that day was ‘Drawing strategic plans’ in whatever projects (indigenous) youth are doing. The dialogue was concluded after discussion on how the next dialogue should be like and separating tasks for members of organizing team. Forth Youth Dialogue: October 29, 2006 at Holiday Garden Hotel, about 50 participants. The forth dialogue was attended by two Shan prominent leaders. They not only talked about their work

experiences but also encouraged youth participation in every aspect. They also showed the ways how to participate in what they were doing. However, not only the two leaders were sharing but some youth also talked about their work experience and their vision. The topics were 'youth and literature' and 'youth and advocacy.'

Source: <http://www.aippfoundation.org/youth%20prog.html>

Title: ***Interfaith Seminary***

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Web: <http://www.i-f-s.org/>

Description: The Interfaith Seminary (IFS), formerly known as the Interfaith School of Theology and under the world-wide umbrella organization of the Church of Seven Planes, was founded to provide a quality religious pastoral education that embraces at its core practical religious scholarship and personal enrichment. We are non-denominational and not associated with any one religious or spiritual group. As our students come from many places across the globe, many lifestyles, many beliefs, and practices our staff tries its best to support all our students endeavors and interests, regardless of personal theology and practices.

Native American Spiritual Studies: The Interfaith Seminary offers the following degrees in Native American Spiritual Studies: M.A. (Master of Arts) in Native American Spiritual Studies. Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) in Native American Spiritual Studies. This degree looks at some of the Native American belief systems, past and present. More importantly, it looks at these ancient and alternative, and often minority, perspectives in light of contemporary concerns and lifestyles and how they can be of continuing use.

Examples of M.A. and Ph.D. courses include: Native American Theology I; Native American Theology II; Native American Theology III; Mother Earth Spirituality; Black Elk and the Lakotas; Independent Studies

Source: <http://www.i-f-s.org/native.html>, <http://www.ncai.org/>

Title: ***National Congress of American Indians***

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(202) 466-7767

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Description: National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was founded in 1944 in response to termination and assimilation policies that the United States forced upon the tribal governments in contradiction of their treaty rights and status as sovereigns. Current issues and activities of the NCAI include: Protection of programs and services to benefit Indian families,

specifically targeting Indian Youth and elders; Promotion and support of Indian education, including Head Start, elementary, post-secondary and Adult Education; Enhancement of Indian health care, including prevention of juvenile substance abuse, HIV-AIDS prevention and other major diseases; Support of environmental protection and natural resources management; Protection of Indian cultural resources and religious freedom rights; Promotion of the Rights of Indian economic opportunity both on and off reservations, including securing programs to provide incentives for economic development and the attraction of private capital to Indian Country; Protection of the Rights of all Indian people to decent, safe and affordable housing

**State-Tribal Relations Project:** States and Indian tribes have a range of common interests. Both states and tribes have a shared responsibility to use public resources effectively and efficiently; both seek to provide comprehensive services such as education, health care and law enforcement to their respective citizens; and both have interconnected interests in safeguarding the environment while maintaining healthy and diversified economies. The components of the State-Tribal Relations Project are: We have established a 12-member advisory council of state legislators and tribal leaders from across the country. The council meets twice a year to provide direction for all project activities and to discuss steps and models that might facilitate more collaborative relationships. Two national meetings per year bring together state legislators and staff, tribal leaders and staff, and other interested parties.

**Tribal Sovereignty Protection Initiative:** The United States Supreme Court issued five decisions affecting the rights of Indian tribes in its recent term that ended on Jun 28, 2001. The Court decided against the tribes in four out of five instances. In particular, the decisions in *Nevada v. Hicks* and *Atkinson Trading Co. v. Shirley* raise strong concerns that the Supreme Court is on an accelerating trend toward removing tribal jurisdiction over the conduct of non-Indians within tribal territory. On September 11, 2001, tribal leaders from across the country met in Washington, DC, to discuss these recent court decisions. They reached consensus to mount an organized effort to halt and reverse the Supreme Court's erosion of tribal sovereignty. The Sovereignty Protection Initiative will: Develop federal legislation to reaffirm tribal jurisdiction. Form a Supreme Court project to support and coordinate tribal advocacy before the Supreme Court. Promote strategies for tribal governance that will Protect tribal jurisdiction. Increase tribal participation in the selection of the federal judiciary. Develop a media and advocacy strategy to inform Congress, the public, and tribal leadership about tribal governance and that will promote the overall initiative. Implement a fundraising campaign to support NCAI and NARF and their related expenses in promoting the initiative

Source: [http://www.ncai.org/Tribal\\_Sovereignty\\_Protection.29.0.html](http://www.ncai.org/Tribal_Sovereignty_Protection.29.0.html)

## Jain

Title: ***The Federation of Jain Associations in North America***

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P.O. Box 700  
Getzville, NY 14068  
USA

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(716)636-5342

Web: <http://www.jaina.org>

Description: The mission of the Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA) “interfaith initiatives” is as follows: To provide exchange of religious views with the other major religions of the world and promote harmony, tolerance & peace with them; to make people aware of Jain teachings and actively promote Jain way of Life.

Recital of Jain Prayer at the UN and US house of Representative: According to the issue of Jain Spectrum (The Jain Voice of North America), September 2005, “the Universal blessings prayer or Shivamastu Sarvajagatah is an authentic prayer and appropriate to the 9/11 type gathering. On September 13, 2005, in the interfaith service on the occasion of the opening of the UN General assembly, International Jain Sangh recited prayer in the presence of Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan.” JAINA was successful in arranging the recital of a Jain Prayer as an opening prayer in the US house of representatives in May 2001 in celebration of the 2600th birth anniversary of Lord Mahavir, the 24th Tirthankars. Jain prayers were also held in the state assemblies of Maryland, Ohio and Virginia.

September 11 Gathering for Peace, Healing and Unity: The Spiritual Unity Network of New Jersey held a September 11 Gathering at the Ethical Culture Society of Essex County, Maplewood, NJ. The program included guided contemplative meditation, a panel discussion, poetry reading, Sufi greetings and Jain blessing.

Peace through Dialogue (14<sup>th</sup> biennial JAINA convention, July 2007): Every other year beginning in 1981 JAINA holds a convention that draws thousands of attendees from all over the world. The Convention entrance was beautifully decorated and included symbols of many religions to project the theme 'Peace through Dialogue'. A symposium on 'Communicating Jainism' in the American Society generated a chain of questions from youth and yielded five volunteers. The women's forum packed with participants included four multi-faith women leaders on its panel. Numerous Jains witnessed the Kesh Lochan ceremony of Mata Shubhamati.



The Barcelona Experience: JAINA & Jainism: According to a report by Naresh Jain in the *Jain Digest*, Fall 2004, “the Jain community made a serious and significant impression among 8,000 religious leaders, activists and lay people in the Barcelona Parliament of World’s Religions from July 7 through July 13, 2004, about the existence of Jainism as a separate religion as well as its dominant teachings of nonviolence in these modern times of increasingly religiously motivated violent world.” The JAINA Exhibition Booth included 15 coordinated poster panels about Jainism, four plates of Jain postal stamps and first day covers, over 50 reference books and attractive decorations. 2000 copies of the book ‘Essence of World Religions’, 1000 copies of the ‘Jainism’ booklet, and flyers on Jainism and the JAINA organization were distributed free of cost. A Jainism flyer from ‘Jain World’ was also included for free distribution.

Source: <http://www.jaina.org/conventionSummary.asp>

Title: ***The Institute of Jainology***  
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28 Wadsworth Road  
Perivale  
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Description: Established in 1983, the Institute of Jainology (IoJ) aims to provide a platform for interaction between different community organizations, where all sectarian traditions jointly promote the faith and engage in discussions amongst themselves, encouraging unity within the Jain community. Promote interfaith relationships to create a better understanding of the Jain faith and to acquaint the Jain community with other faiths.

Parliament of the World's Religions: IoJ became a member of the Council of World Parliament of Religions and actively sought participation in the Parliamentary sessions by the International Jain communities. Jain has attended the two parliamentary sessions - in 1993 and 2000.

Interfaith Dialogue with the Vatican: At the invitation of the Vatican, in February 1995, IoJ organised the visit of representatives of the Jain community to the Vatican for an Interfaith Dialogue and an audience with H H Pope John Paul II. This meeting has resulted in cooperation and exchange visits of Christian monks and nuns with their Jain counterparts in India. Regular contacts have been maintained with the Vatican. Greetings are exchanged with the Vatican on festive occasions. Invitations



are received from the Vatican for their major functions and in most cases these have been honoured.

Alliance of Religions and Conservation Summit: In April 1995, IoJ participated in the Alliance of Religions and Conservation Summit held at Atami, Japan and at Windsor, UK. IoJ described the Jain's gift to humanity - the building of the village of Ladakpur and presented the Chitrabhanu's composition 'Maitri Bhavnu Pavitra Zarnu' with its meaning described in English.

Interfaith Activities in the UK: IoJ participated in an interfaith exhibition organised by Harrow schools in 1994. IoJ coordinated the planning of the Jain section of the faith zone in the Millenium Dome. IoJ became the first organisation to arrange a cultural program at the Dome by arranging the Mahavir Janma Kalyanak celebrations in the year 2000. Over 1,800 Jains and non Jains watched the program.

'The Peaceful Liberators' Art Exhibition: The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, is to hold the most comprehensive exhibition ever presented of the artistic tradition emerging from the Jain religion. The exhibition, organised in co operation with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, is having its only European showing at the V&A from 22nd November. The purpose of the exhibition 'The Peaceful Liberators' is to present before Western audiences the remarkable artistic achievement of Jainism and its contribution to world religion.

Discover Jainism Project: Discover Jainism' is the first book on Jainism that is aimed at young people and is an introduction to the ideas and lives of Jains in Britain and India. Institute of Jainology's project to have Jain faith as one of the standard religions to be taught in schools has now taken off. The first stage was to work with QCA to ensure Jainism was covered in the National Curriculum objectives for Key Stage 2.

Learn Jainism Project: A web site has been launched to provide resources and activities for primary schools. Learn Jainism Project has twp components: Fun and games: Learn through our fun crosswords, word seaches, quizzes and jigsaws; Teacher's notes: Suggestions on how to use the 'Learn Jainism' website and the 'Discover Jainism' book.

Source: [http://www.jainology.org/viewindex.asp?article\\_id=Proj\\_Interfaith](http://www.jainology.org/viewindex.asp?article_id=Proj_Interfaith)

Title: ***Jain Centre of Leicester (Jain Samaj Europe)***

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Web: <http://www.jaincentre.com>

Description: Jain Centre's mission is to be recognized nationally and internationally as an organization for establishing a network to share Jain

heritage and religion. The aims of Jain Centre's mission are: The advancement of the Jain Religion and principles of Jainism, particularly but not exclusively by the provisions of place of meeting, worship, study and library; Research and publications on Jainism in simple language: For Jain, For Europeans at large, For Scholars, studying religions in general, Publications of Comprehensive Bibliography for Jain Studies; Training teachers for Jainism; Co-ordination for Jain Institutions, followers of Jainism and scholars doing research in Jainism in Europe; To promote the principle - AHIMSA (Non-violence), especially vegetarianism and to encourage research at that end; To inform and publish Jain Map of India, with provision of places of pilgrimages. Jain Institutions and Jain community in India; To organize religious tours of pilgrimages in India; To foster and understanding of the place of Jainism in context to other religions; Co-operation with like minded organization.

The Jain centre is the first place in the Western World having temples housing the consecrated images; the main image is that of Bhagwan Shantinath, the 16th tirthankara. It has Svetambar temple, Digambar temple, Sthanakwasi Upashraya, Guru mandeer, Shrimad Rajchandra jnan mandeer, museum, library, auditorium, dining hall and other facilities. It has become a vibrant place of worship for Jains not only in Leicester, but also in the United Kingdom, and a place of pilgrimage for the Jains world over.

Source: <http://www.jaincentre.com>

Title: ***Centre of Jaina Studies***

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University of London  
Thornhaugh Street  
Russell Square  
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Web: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/centres/centreinfo.cfm?navid=863>

Description: The aim of the Centre of Jaina Studies (COJS) is to promote the study of Jaina religion and culture by providing an interdisciplinary platform for academic research, teaching and publication in the field of Jaina Studies. Its purpose is to promote teaching, research and study in the field of Jaina Studies at SOAS; to provide a forum for Jaina Studies for staff and students within SOAS and for scholars from other institutions and organisations; and to foster closer links between SOAS and other individuals and institutions with an academic interest in Jaina Studies.

Research degrees: The Department of the Study of Religions offers research degrees (MPhil, PhD) in the Study of Jainism. BA Courses include: Introduction To Jainism, Jain Scriptures. MA Courses include:

Jain Scripture and Community, Jainism: History, Doctrine and the Contemporary World.

*International Journal of Jaina Studies* (IJJS): The Centre of Jaina Studies at SOAS established the International Journal of Jaina Studies to facilitate academic communication. The main objective of the journal is to publish research papers, monographs, and reviews in the field of Jain Studies in a form that makes them quickly and easily accessible to the international academic community, and to the general public.

Jaina Studies Conferences 1999-2007: Current Trends in Jaina Research (1999); Jain History and Culture (2000); The Life and Work of Srimad Rajacandra (2000); Aspects of Jainism (2001); Text and Context in Jainism (2003); Jaina Doctrines and Dialogues (2004); Jaina Law and the Jaina Community (2005); Jainism and Society (2006); Jainism and Modernity (2007)

Jainism and Society: The 8th international Jaina Studies Workshop at SOAS was funded by the British Arts and Humanities Research Council as part of the research project on Jaina Law and Identity at SOAS. The conference addressed the question of how Jain culture reproduces itself socially, sandwiched as it is today between a thin layer of Jain mendicants and lay virtuosi and society as a whole. What are the main features of Jain culture, society, and law? And how are social identities constructed and perpetuated? reports Peter Flügel.

Jaina Law and the Jaina Community: According to a report by Peter Flügel, the 7th Workshop on 'Jaina Law and the Jaina Community' on the 17-18 March 2005 was organized by the Centre of Jaina Studies at SOAS in collaboration with the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Lund, and financed by the AHRB project at SOAS on 'Jaina Law and the Jaina Community'.

Jainism and Modernity, March 2007: The conference focused on religious responses to modernity within the Jain tradition. Contributions are invited on the relationship between Jainism and science & technology, colonialism and globalisation, social reform, the Jain diaspora, and related issues.

Source: CoJS Newsletter, March 2006, Issue 1; CoJS Newsletter, March 2007, Issue 2

Title: ***Bhogilal Leherchand Institute of Indology***  
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(+11)-272-02065

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Description: The academic program of Bhogilal Leherchand Institute of Indology (BLII) is to initiate, organize and give a fill-up to research in Indological subjects in general and Jainological projects in particular. This is a fast-changing world. The scope and field of study and research has enlarged beyond imagination. Topics like comparative religion, Yoga and Spiritualism, Vegetarianism, preservation and protection of environment, interfaith studies and research on the essential unity of all religious communities, non-possession and sustainable growth vs. consumerism and environmental degradation have acquired popularity in the famous Universities of the West. Studies on these topics are gaining ground in Indian Universities as well. The Bhogilal Leherchand Institute of Indology, a premier Institution of International repute, was first started at Patan (North Gujarat) in the year 1980, through the funds provided by the family trust of Bhogilal Family to sponsor and promote research in Jainology/Indology and other aspects of Indian culture.

The Institute is engaged in following activities: Works on Projects sponsored by Government/Semi-government/Non-government organizations. The BLII faculties teach, guide and make available the references and books to the students, researchers and the Jain monks-nuns who come to Vallabh Smarak for their studies. BLII extends all possible facilities to the Scholars from India and abroad, Jain Monks and knowledge seekers for their studies and research in the field of Indology. Editing old Texts of Sanskrit, Prakrit, Ardha-magadhi, Apabhramsha, and Pali languages.

Interdisciplinary areas of study: The Institute aims to enter into areas of intellectual quest, which have not so far been fully exploited. Jainism stands for the unity and equality of life. This truth has now been accepted by almost of all religions and intellectuals with a scientific temperament. Hence, the idea of a synthesis between religion and science should be inculcated in the young minds.

The following interdisciplinary studies are offered: Prakrit language and literature; Religion and philosophy of the Jain community; Manuscriptology, research methodology and epigraphy; Indian culture; Comparative religion; Non-violence, conflict, resolution and peace; Yoga, Spiritualism and Vegetarianism; Non-possession and sustainable growth vs consumerism and environmental degradation; Elements of essential unity among world religions; Spiritualism as a universal religion; Comparative studies in religion, science and philosophy.

Organizing Summer Schools since 1989: A three week-long summer school is being organized under the kind supervision and guidance of Dr. Satya Ranjan Banarjee, every year on Prakrit Language

and Literature, Jain Religion and Philosophy, Manuscriptology, Research Methodology and Epigraphy etc. This year we have organized 18th National Summer School on Prakrit Language, Literature & Manuscriptology.

Long term projects and advancement of Research: Research projects based on Prakrit literature, religion, philosophy, epigraphy and other areas of related Jainological studies are being pursued consistently. Similarly, work on sciences in Prakrit literature will be taken up on a priority basis.

Library of BLII: The Institute has acquired more than 26,000 printed books in its well-managed library. These books are mainly related to Jain and Vedic Texts and studies in various Indian languages viz. Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali, Ardha-magadhi, Apabhramsha, Maru-gurjar, Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, Bengali, Tamil, Oriya, Punjabi, Urdu languages as well as in English, German, French also.

Source: <http://www.blinstitute.org/activities.html>  
<http://www.blinstitute.org/activities.html>

Title: ***International Summer School for Jain Studies***

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Description: ISSJS was launched in 2005 and the first summer school was successfully conducted and completed in June - July 2005. The main objects of International Summer School for Jain Studies (ISSJS) is to support a comprehensive, scholarly and experimental introduction of Jain academic studies in the universities around the world and North America in particular. ISSJS implements the program by a process of careful screening of potential scholars, taking them to India for two months of intensive academic studies, social, ritual, pilgrimage, monks interaction to make a Jain live experience. This program will be conducted each summer for a period of two months (June, July). ISSJS is a sponsored concept by the Academic Studies of Jainism in North America 'ASJNA', World Council of Jain Academies 'WCJA', Jain Academic Foundation of North America (JAFNA) and Mahavir Vision INC 'MVI' from the USA.

ISSJS courses: Its purpose is to impart advanced grounding/skills in the Jain religion (for an understanding of the many facets of Jainism including its history, culture, politics, philosophy, ethics and practice). The teaching will include: Interactive classroom lectures using modern teaching aides and tools by eminent scholars. Live interaction: visits to Jain homes, family ceremonies, temple worship, rituals, festivals, pilgrimage

and visual and performing arts; interactions with Jain monks and nuns; access to Jain libraries, literature and interaction with prominent Jains.

The course provides an introduction to Jainism in the widest sense, covering Jain doctrine, the social history of the Jains, Jain heritage, rituals and their importance in the life of the people, Jain way of life, place of Jainism in modern society, and contemporary religious practice. At the end of the course a student will become familiar with principal issues of Jain research, and able to identify both the philosophical, ritual and organizational differences between the main Jain sects, and the role of synergetic imports from other religious and cultural traditions.

The need for Jain presence and contribution in the rest of the world: Jainism, even though the oldest of Indian traditions, has a comparatively miniscule status in academia in North America. The 21st Century is hailed as the "Century of Asia" with India and China assuming world leadership positions. South Asian studies are making rapid advances in American universities, due to: The new pluralistic outlook in the country; The large and growing influx of immigrants from the subcontinent who give faces to Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Islam, increasing number of university faculty and physicians of Indian origin; The emergence of religion as a major political player on the world stage and the felt need to think globally.

ISSJS's course syllabus: Jain history, culture, literature, arts and festivals; Ontology and metaphysics; Karma theory; epistemology; ethics; Mahāvīra, his time and contributions; special topics such as Non violence (Ahiṃsā) Non absolutism (Anekānta) Jain way of life; and Jain Interactions (weekend programs) meeting people and monks, time with families, pilgrimages, city tours.

Source: <http://www.jainstudies.org/summerschoolsyllabus.htm>  
<http://jainstudies.org/AboutUs.htm>

Title: ***Jain Vishva Bharati Institute*** (Deemed University)

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Description: Jain Vishva Bharati Institute was established in 1991 with inspiration from His Holiness Acharya Tulsi, a seer, saint and scholar. "We the members of Jain Vishva Bharati, therefore, resolve to constitute and establish the said Institute of Advanced Studies, Research and Training in Jainology in the context of comparative studies in Jainology, World Religions, Ahimsa (Non-violence) and World Peace."

School of Jainology & Oriental Studies: (a) M.A. in Jainology and Comparative Religion & Philosophy: Jainology has one of the richest heritages of learning and culture, with a tradition of tolerance, catholicity and synthesis. A Two year Master's degree programme in this subject includes metaphysics, ethics, yoga, epistemology, history of Jainism and Jain literature, Jain culture & art along with the comparative studies of Indian and western religions and philosophies. (b) M.A. in Prakrit and Jain Agama: The syllabus for Prakrit and Jain Agama has been outlined on a broader basis keeping in view the representation of the main Prakrit Dialects and their Literature. For this reason the main basis of the Syllabus is historical. Prakrit Literature starts with Agama Sahitya both Svetambara and Digambara as the ancient scriptures of Prakrit. Prakrit Kavya literature, Prakrit Grammar and Prakrit philosophy, Prakrit Philosophical texts, Prakrit Drama, Desi Literature and prosody, Inscriptional Prakrit, some Pali texts and History of Prakrit Literature are the main components of the Subject. M.Phil papers include: Jain Philosophy; Comparative Religion and Inter-Cultural Dialogue; Indian and Western philosophy; Research Methodology and Seminar papers; Dissertation and Viva. Ma papers include: Jain History, Culture, Literature and Art; Jain Metaphysics and Ethics; Dhyan, Yoga and Karma Mimansa; Jain Epistemology (Gyan Mimansa) and Jain Logic.

Department of Non-violence & Peace: The objective of department of Non-violence and Peace is to provide necessary knowledge and skills to enable individuals to acquire in depth understanding of the problems of human survival and crisis, and resolving them by nonviolent means thus contributing to establishment of peace on our planet. The department endeavors to teaching theory and gives ample opportunity to practice and promote higher ideals of 'Ahimsa', 'Anekant', 'Tolerance' and 'Peaceful Coexistence'. The teaching programmes consists of theoretical and practical components, based on philosophy of nonviolence, conflict resolution, methodology of peace research, the concept of Anuvrat (small vows), training in applied nonviolence, peace education, human rights, Gandhian thoughts and economic reconstruction, environmental protection and lastly not the least moving towards a sustainable earth to achieve the ultimate objective of peace on Earth.

Courses offered by the department: Ph.D. and D.Litt; Two years P.G. Course in Non-violence, Peace and Conflict Management; One year P.G. Diploma in Non-violence and Peace; Three Months Certificate Course in Training in Non-violence and Peace. B. A. papers include: Nonviolence and Peace: Indian Perspective; Application of nonviolence; Nonviolence and Peace: Non Indian Perspective Nonviolence and Anuvrat; Peace Organisations and Peace Movements; Conflict Resolution, Human Rights and Training in Nonviolence. M.A. papers include: Philosophy of Nonviolence and Peace; Sociology or Nonviolence and Peace or Rural Development or Social Work; Nonviolent Economic



Reconstruction; Conflict Resolution and Peace Technology; Field Assignment Reports, Practical and viva-voce; Peace Education and Training in Nonviolence; Human Rights and Peace Movement; Environmental Ethics: A Non-violent Approach; Panchayati Raj in India or Methodology of Peace Research; Dissertation based on Project and viva-voce.

Source: <http://jvbi.ac.in/academics.html>

Title: ***Jain Heritage Centres***

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Web: <http://www.jainheritagecentres.com>

Description: This website has been launched with an intension of giving information about the different Jain pilgrimage places in India. We are trying our level best to cover as many places as possible, so as to give the visitors complete first hand information.

Jain Heritage Centres Group: Jain Heritage Centres is maintaining a yahoo e-group called as Jain Heritage Centres where in the members of the group will receive mails about the updates in this website and also they will receive news about the annual pooja mahotsav, pancha kalyan and other special events taking place in different parts of the world. Why Jain Heritage Centres Group? It is the aim of this un-moderated group to make the internet a more useful medium for the Jains in India and abroad, by providing an easy means of interaction amongst the email users across the country, and connecting the Jains across the globe together. If you are not in India, it gives you a way of contacting with the Jains in India.

*Jain Voice* (a popular Jain periodical on the internet): Mahatma Gandhi, the great exponent of nonviolence, was greatly influenced by the principles of Jainism especially in the early part of his life. His mother approached Becharji, a Jain saint, on the eve of departure of Gandhi to other countries. Gandhiji was advised to forbid nonvegetarianism during his stay abroad and he agreed to abide it and left for England. The practice of self control was observed by him. He ached many tribulations by following vegetarianism but never gave away the path. He was influenced by Raichand Bhai on his return from England. Raichand Bhai was a Jain poet and prolific writer who followed the principles of Jainism significantly. He was much admired by Gandhiji, says H. A.



Parshwanath's editorial, "Mahatma Gandhi and Jainism," (Vol.4 Issue 1, May 2005)

Ahimsa, the need of the hour: The beginning of the 21st century, as a continuation of its previous century, is witnessing a hazardous sequence. This has caused marked encumbrance and uncertainty on the part of the people of the country far and wide. The religion is a means to evoke awareness among the people in the test of time. It is a tool by which a healthy and pure thinking be reckoned. Ahimsa is the harbinger of peace and happy living. Jainism processes the inherent and potential capacity in refining the minds of the people through all the possible means, says the Jain Voice editorial of H. A. Parshwanath, Vol.2, Issue 11, March 2004.

Religious tolerance in Jainism: Jainism is widely known for its principles and percepts. Its Characteristics are universal and unique in its true sense and spirit. Its main aim is to do good to humanity and proper living. It has restored peace through its principle of non violence. It is tolerant towards the vanities and vagaries. It processes the greatest quality of forgiveness. It emphasises the role of patience and endurance to combat the onslaughts it has won the hearts of the traditionalists and as well as the rationalists due to its sublime character and concern for the sufferings of all living beings, says "Religious tolerance in Jainism," Jain Voice editorial by H. A. Parshwanath.

Jainism and Swami Vivekananda: Swami Vivekananda, the great saint of India, viewed Jainism in its true perceptiveness and objectivity. He opined that Jainism was a great religion which put forth the concept of *Ahimsa and Truth* as its main principles. Jainism paved the way for nonviolence and the religion stood on the basis of chastity and purity which flourished the Indian subcontinent through the centuries, according to *Jain Voice*, Vol.3 Issue 3, July 2004.

Source: <http://www.jainheritagecentres.com/index/aboutus.htm>  
<http://www.jainheritagecentres.com/index/jainavoice.htm>; *Jain Voice*

Title: ***Oshwal Academy***

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Web: <http://www.oshwal-academy.com>

Description: Oshwal Academy was founded in 1968 as Oshwal Secondary School. We have developed an effective, integrated environment that enables educational excellence and encourages pupils to become critical, analytical thinkers and confident leaders. We also foster appreciation of

cultural diversity and dynamism that prepares our students for life in a pluralistic society.

Learnig at Oshwal: (a) The Kindergarten school: The Kindergarten School caters for girls and boys from Playgroup to Reception Class (ages 2-5). We believe that children should be taught to work and play constructively at the earliest opportunity. The Kindergarten curriculum promotes play as the best vehicle for learning in ages 2 – 5 yrs. (b) The Junior School: The Junior School caters for children of ages 6 – 11yrs. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the vast array of the sporting and co-curricular activities on offer at the Academy. (c) The senior school: Entry into the senior school is at Year 7 (Age 12). Students are then examined at Year 11 (Age 16) in the IGCSE curriculum. In Years 12 and 13 students sit pre-university AS/A2 level examinations for entry into universities world wide.

Oshwal Academy Model United Nations Club Hosts Conference: Model United Nations (MUN) is an authentic simulation of the UN General assembly and introduces students into the world of diplomacy and negotiations. The Model United Nations Club of Oshwal Academy held 4th successful annual (Oshwal African Model United Nation) OAMUN conference 27th – 29th of October 2006, which ended with a ‘Halloween’ ball. The conference also attracted other schools from Mombasa, including Mombasa Academy and Jaffery Academy. A global summit was held and during this debate, gruelling world issues such as abortion and its legality were discussed.

Oshwal academy hosts interschool French verse speaking: Oshwal Academy hosted the first ever Interschool French Verse-speaking Competition for junior schools on Tuesday 12th June and emerged second overall. Jaffery Academy took the top position consequently taking home the winner’s shield. There was serious competition from Busy Bee School who left a mark that they were a team to watch despite their third place standing. The competition attracted nine schools and targeted pupils from Years (Standard) 3 to 6. There were two categories in the entries: solo set piece for each class and one choral verse from each school.

Resolution Award on Human Rights: Fifteen Oshwal Academy students traveled to Nairobi between 16 February and 22 February 2004 to participate in the EAMUN (East African Model United Nation) sessions, which were held at the UNEP Headquarters in Gigiri. Oshwal Academy is the only school in the Coast Province to be registered with MUN. The Academy’s delegates were allocated Austria, Cote d’Ivoire and South Korea for the February 2004 session. One of the Academy’s groups representing Austria received the Best Resolution Award on Human Rights along with Guinea, Colombia, Lithuania and Sierra Leone.

Source: [http://www.oshwal-academy.com/model\\_un.htm](http://www.oshwal-academy.com/model_un.htm)

Title: ***India-Jain-Ramadan***

Address: N/A

Web: <http://www.pluralism.org/news/article.php?id=13782>

Description: The Religious Diversity News of Harvard University's Pluralism Project present the following story in interfaith activity by a family, based on a report by the *Islamic Republic News Agency* on Oct 11, 2006. "A family of Jain religion observes Ramadan in India," says the report.

India-Jain-Ramadan: Believing that Ramadan is a month during which God tests its followers, a family of the Jain religion in Mumbai, capital city of Maharashtra, has been observing the month-long Ramadan, one of the pillars of the Muslim faith, in the past 30 years.

While the practice is sacred for Muslims, Jains too are known to observe an annual fast during the time of Pajusan. Explaining what makes her family observe the holy fast of the Muslim community, Smita Mandeviya said: "I was a frequent visitor at the residence of Maulana Abbas Rizvi, who stayed near. He regarded me as his own daughter. He used to observe the fast, and I was inspired by him to fast," Asian Age quoted Mandeviya as saying from Mumbai.

Despite being a staunch Jain, Mandeviya speaks chaste Urdu. She believes "faith does not depend on the tenets of any religion." She said that even the stomach needed some rest and that fasting as a practice also has scientific backing. "That does not mean I ignore the sanctity of Ramazan," Mandeviya added. She claimed that when her husband, Mohanlal, was alive, he also observed the fast. Mandeviya, though a Jain, has never felt that Ramadan was a month of fasting only for Muslims. "I believe that Ramazan is a month where God tests you. Being a Jain has never deterred me from fasting for the past 30 years. I will continue to observe the fast while I am alive," she said.

Source: <http://www.irna.ir/en/news/view/menu-234/0610114210122921.htm>;  
Report taken from the "Religious Diversity News" of Harvard University's Pluralism Project

Title: ***Jainworld.com***

Address: 715 Bellemeade Place  
Alpharetta, GA 30004

Phone: 678 362 2662

Email: [vinod@jainworld.com](mailto:vinod@jainworld.com)

Web: <http://www.jainworld.com/>

Description: Since 1997, [www.jainworld.com](http://www.jainworld.com) has been the most comprehensive and popular web-site on Jainism. This has been the result of tireless efforts and dedication by 500+ people from all walks of life and diverse belief systems representing different nationalities across the globe. JainWorld is the de-facto entry point to the exciting world of Jainism.

Mission Statement: Together, we will revolutionize the way Jainism is perceived globally. 'Jainworld' is not just about creating websites. It is much more. It is a movement. It is a dynamic, bold, and a new approach to present exciting world of Jainism to the entire world.

JainWorld will be a tool to create a new awareness about the unique principals of Jainism. Make core values of Jainism accessible to all, all the time, in all the languages (Just like all attendees could understand preaching of Tirthankar during Samavasaran (assembly) regardless of their languages.) To make the message of 'Jina' available to all the human beings for their spiritual progress and soul perfection

Objectives: Provide to the world the relevance of Jainism to today's age. Jainism can potentially offer solutions to today's problems facing the man kind. To create a global identity for Jainism as an independent and unique religion with it's great value system. Extend the coverage of Jainworld.com to more than 95% of the global population by bringing 24 language editions known as Mission\*24L\* plan.

This will be a Jain Community resource center which will benefit all aspects of Jainism like Spiritual, Business, Cultural, art and music,. This will also serve as an archive center for manuscripts and other things. Jain database will help to discuss Jain issues and create mass movement for Jain causes.

Source: <http://www.jainworld.com/aboutus.asp>

## **Jewish**

Title: ***I am Joseph Your Brother: Christian-Jewish Educational Enrichment Program***

Address: P.O. Box 705  
New York, NY 10150  
United States

Contact: 212-751-4000

Web: [www.ajc.org](http://www.ajc.org)

Description: The American Jewish Committee, established in 1906 by a small group of American Jews deeply concerned about pogroms aimed at Russian Jews, determined that the best way to protect Jewish populations in danger would be to work towards a world in which all peoples were accorded respect and dignity. The key areas of focus are: Combating anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry; Promoting pluralism and shared democratic values; Supporting Israel's quest for peace and security; Advocating for energy independence; and Strengthening Jewish life. AJC's approach, tackling a breadth of interests in a deliberate and diplomatic manner, contributes to a success that gains trust, earns access, and, most importantly, produces results.

According to the organization, "The American Jewish Committee (AJC) has played a leadership role in the field of interreligious and interethnic work for almost a century. Fundamental to AJC's mission has been the belief that the security and well-being of the Jewish community is connected to that of all groups in America. Supporting democracy and pluralism, promoting intergroup relations to achieve social harmony and cohesion, and building coalitions to advance shared interests, have always been the central focus of our intergroup work. AJC has long held that this is how best to serve the interwoven interests of the nation and of American Jews. AJC is deeply committed to sustaining support for Israel at a critical time in its history, combating new expressions of anti-Semitism, countering terrorism, strengthening democratic values and maintaining a balance between cherished civil liberties and valid national security concerns in the wake of 9/11.

AJC interreligious affairs have historically concentrated on Christian-Jewish relations, with new efforts and initiatives involving the Muslim community, as well. Now, as America's population more and more reflects the pluralism of the world faith community, [it] will identify and pursue opportunities to develop positive and meaningful relationships with all religious communities.

**I am Joseph Your Brother: Christian-Jewish Educational Enrichment Program** is geared toward high-school age and adult students and offers twelve sessions on the basics of Christianity and Judaism. With

... individual units, user friendly session materials and accessible charts and take-homes, each unit is a world unto itself or, combined, a powerful tool to cross religious boundaries. Each session is a pathway for Christians to explore Judaism or for Jews to explore Christianity. The core program can be taught by a Christian or Jewish educator/clergy or run by the group itself. Through the process of discovery, participants can better appreciate the religious traditions of others and find bridges for conversation and understanding. This program is perfect for Christian-Jewish dialogue groups, church-synagogue youth or adult programs, and for Christian parochial school and Jewish day schools or confirmation programs. Funded by a grant from the Righteous Persons Foundation.

Source: [http://www.ajc.org/site/c.ijITI2PHKoG/b.1706977/k.6E89/Interreligious\\_Programs.htm](http://www.ajc.org/site/c.ijITI2PHKoG/b.1706977/k.6E89/Interreligious_Programs.htm)

Title: ***The Abrahamic Fellows Program***

Address: P.O. Box 705  
New York, NY 10150  
United States

Contact: 212-751-4000

Web: [www.ajc.org](http://www.ajc.org)

Description: The AJC seeks to generate lasting interfaith connections and provide new activist leadership in the USA for Jewish-Muslim-Christian relations for the future. The Abrahamic Fellows Program is designed to create over time in the United States, a significant group of influential young leaders of various religious communities who will have shared a formative interfaith experience that they will want to pass on to others in their communities. Every year, they will select a few communities positioned to gather at least six Fellows made up of young clergy, community professionals or other opinion shapers in the field (such as journalists or college lecturers or other educators) ideally with track records but still early enough in their careers that we can hope to have some role in shaping what they do with this experience over time. These would be mixed groups of Muslims, Christians and Jews. They will participate in a national training program with our own experts as well as like-minded leaders in the other religious communities. Funded by a grant from Sydney and Helaine Lerner

Source: [http://www.ajc.org/site/c.ioJNISoyErH/b.2690755/k.6D9C/Interreligious\\_Programs.htm](http://www.ajc.org/site/c.ioJNISoyErH/b.2690755/k.6D9C/Interreligious_Programs.htm)

Title: ***The Elijah School***

Address: 10 Caspi St.  
Jerusalem, Israel 93554  
(has offices in the US, India, Canada, England, Taiwan)

Contact: +972-2-672-9276

Web: [www.elijah-interfaith.org](http://www.elijah-interfaith.org)

Description: The Elijah Interfaith Institute is a multinational organization dedicated to fostering peace between the world's diverse faith communities through interfaith dialogue, education, research and dissemination. The choice of naming the institute after the prophet Elijah is appropriate inasmuch as the figure of Elijah is recognized and venerated in the Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions. His image as it emerges in some of these traditions is as an ever-present teacher, spiritual guide, harbinger of peace, and precursor of a better world to come.

The organization's unique programming generates interfaith dialogue at the highest levels, bringing together world religious leaders and renowned scholars the world over, through research projects, public conferences and community-based initiatives.

The Elijah Interfaith Institute is a bridge-builder: between the theoretical study of religion and the quest for wisdom and spirituality; between theoretical study and action oriented programs, geared at creating social change and advancing the long term goals of peace-making; not only between the Abrahamic religions but also between them and the religions of the East; of dialogue and collaboration between world religious leadership, scholars and thinkers of diverse religious traditions and lay leadership; between thinkers and religious teachers in different parts of the world through its international programs and networks; between religious thinkers, policy makers and educators, allowing the best of our religions to serve as an inspiration to society.

The major strength of the Elijah School consists of academic study, which takes place not in isolation or in abstraction, but within an interfaith community of faculty and students. Interfaith dialogue forms the backbone of the school and allows for the integration of the study of religious traditions with exposure to their lived spirituality. In addition, the school seeks to ground the teaching of religion in a deeper level of experience and engagement with issues of mutual concern.

Yearlong activity of the Elijah School in Jerusalem is currently postponed until completion of the HOPE project. Activity of the school currently takes place through a variety of academic partnerships. The annual summer school program has been taking place, for a number of years, in Montreal, in collaboration with McGill University. Other Elijah school activities are taking place through additional partnerships, particularly in seminaries affiliated with the "Theologies of World Religions" project. Plans have also been drawn up for developing several academic consortia, in different parts of the world. These academic consortia would run academic programs, conferences, lecture series and more within their specific geographic regions. Creating such consortia would engage local academic resources in the various communities and territories to which Elijah's work spreads. These academic consortia

would also provide the academic base to support the local work of the Educational Network.

Source: <http://www.elijah-interfaith.org/532/>

Title: ***Individual Participation***

Address: Cape Town, South Africa

Contact: N/A

Web: N/A

Description: Mickey Glass, Executive Director of the Union of Othodox Synagogues of South Africa, writes: "There is little theological interaction between the various faith communities in South Africa. Whatever co-operation exists is based on social inter-action --- reacting jointly when disaster strikes, eg. A fire or floods destroying shacks, providing assistance to those less fortunate to withstand the rigours of a cold, wet, windy winter.

The most divisive matter which everyone tries to avoid is the mess in the Middle East. The Muslims and most of the Christian churches automatically react to 'Israel's suppression of human rights' without giving any consideration, or wishing to do so, to the causes of the conflict, the need of Israel to protect itself against terrorist suicide bombers and daily rocket/missile attacks. As Tony Blair so eloquently said recently, the perpetrators know that by causing Israel to react the way it feels necessary, this reaction evokes more condemnation and so on.

What makes co-operation more difficult is the very militant approach adopted by the Muslim Judicial Council, the major religious authority for Muslims in South Africa. It has opened a Palestinian desk, it provides regular sermons attacking Jews, it sponsors anti-Israel and anti-Jewish radio programmes. Whereas in the past, there was co-operation on a variety of religious issues which impact on religious Muslims and Jews, eg. placing interns in rural areas to complete 'community service' without ensuring that they in areas where they can continue to give practical expression to their faith such as a Mosque, kosher food, leaving Muslim girls alone in a strange environment, etc., this no longer happens.

The Traditional African communities, Bahai, Buddhists, and other smaller sects (there are 346 different sects in South Africa) continue to co-operate as in 1 above.

In October this year a project will be initiated to try and bring together the Abrahamic faiths. Based on the story of Abraham who kept all 4 sides of his tent open to welcome wayfarers, a large tent will be erected in the centre of the city with the co-operation of local and regional government. Islam, Christian and Jewish religious leaders will sit together to inter-act with the public and as this project will cover major festivals for each of the 3 faiths, it is hoped that this show of inter-religious co-operation will have positive spin off in the ambient society.



Government believes that the faith communities are best able to direct government funding to those in need as the religious leaders are those who are, generally closest, to the people who desperately need aid to survive. Thus the NRLF (National Religious Leaders Forum) and its regional (state) offshoots are invited to participate with government in various social welfare initiatives. Some religious leaders are reluctant to get involved as they fear being stigmatized as having been ‘co-opted’, of being used by politicians who have their own agendas. They quote numerous examples of the catastrophic consequences which followed religious groups getting ‘into bed’ with political power and political ideologies.

The inter-faith movement in this country has a proud record of working together for the common good and of generating respect for one another’s beliefs. Our prayer is that outside issues do not bedevil the relationships which have been built up over decades.

Source: Provided by Mickey Glass, Executive Director of the Union of Othodox Synagogues of South Africa

Title: ***JDC-IDP and Caritas Joint Project***

Address: 711 3rd Ave  
New York, NY 10017

Contact: (212) 687-6200

Web: <http://www.jdc.org/index.html>

Description: “Since 1914, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Inc. (JDC) has served as the overseas arm of the American Jewish community. [Its] mission is to serve the needs of Jews throughout the world, particularly where their lives as Jews are threatened or made more difficult. [They] sponsor programs of relief, rescue and renewal and help Israel address its most urgent social challenges. [They] are committed to the idea that all Jews are responsible for one another. Rescue – Whenever and wherever a Jewish community is threatened, JDC offers rescue. In the early 1990s, JDC helped sustain the lives and secure the rescue of 15,000 Ethiopian Jews. Relief – For Jewish communities in distress, JDC offers aid. For more than a decade, JDC has been providing food, clothing and medicine to some 250,000 elderly and impoverished Holocaust survivors in the former Soviet Union. Renewal – Since the fall of communist regimes in Europe, JDC has been helping Jewish communities rediscover their heritage and rebuild a vibrant Jewish communal life. Israel – JDC continues to provide assistance to the State of Israel as it addresses the social service needs of its most vulnerable communities: children-at-risk, struggling immigrant populations, the elderly and the disabled. Non-Sectarian Aid – In times of crisis – natural disasters, war, famine – JDC offers aid to non-Jews to fulfill the Jewish tenet of tikkun olam, the moral responsibility to repair the world and alleviate suffering wherever it exists.

Our Operating Principles – JDC adheres to three operating principles. [They] are non-partisan and apolitical. [They] seek to empower local communities by creating model programs and training local leadership to run the programs. During a project's formative stage, [they] handle the administrative responsibilities and evaluate the project for effectiveness. [They] build coalitions with strategic partners who, ultimately, will assume responsibility for the programs."

"... Over 4 million children are categorized as living below the "misery line" with reports of children dying of starvation in many of the poorest areas in the country. In response, JDC has expanded its Jewish welfare activities to include assistance to non-Jewish families.

JDC is also aiding in the Garrahan Children's Hospital Fund by covering the costs of maintaining one of the 30 rooms used to house seriously ill children who must move to Buenos Aires to receive urgent medical care. Each of the 30 rooms accommodate up to 50 children and mothers, who are able to reside there for a period of up to one year.

JDC donated needed equipment and continues to supply medicines to the Moisesville and Basavilvaso Hospitals, both of which were founded by Jewish immigrants at the end of the 19th century. Today, these public hospitals serve predominantly non-Jewish patients. JDC is also providing non-financial support to B'nai B'rith Argentina and the American organization Brother's Brother to help conduct their pharmaceutical distribution programs.

In Argentina, JDC-IDP is working with *Caritas*, the social service arm of the Catholic Church, to support children's soup kitchens in 40 kindergartens that serve 3,500 children from poor families in San Isidro."

Source: [http://jdc.org/nonsect\\_currentresponse.html](http://jdc.org/nonsect_currentresponse.html)

Title: ***Children of Abraham***

Address: 307 W. 38th Street

Room 1805

New York, NY 10018

Contact: 212-375-2620

Web: [www.children-of-abraham.org](http://www.children-of-abraham.org)

Description: In the summer of 2003, two Orthodox Jewish high school students in New York, Sima Greenbaum and Eitan Hochster, set out to capture in photographs the most visually compelling similarities between Islam and Judaism. The idea for their project was conceived by Mr. Eli Epstein, an Orthodox Jew with many years of business experience in the Middle East, who had been struck by the profound similarities between the two faiths over the course of his many trips to predominantly Muslim countries.

Sima and Eitan's work was made into a booklet that Mr. Epstein began to take with him on his travels, routinely receiving the same reaction from his Muslim colleagues of shock and bewilderment. Time

and again, the reaction from Muslims abroad and Jews in his own community was the same. Seeing how Sima and Eitan had been transformed by participating in such a photographic exploration, Mr. Epstein imagined twenty students – ten Jewish and ten Muslim – spread out all over the world – engaging in a similar journey. He hired Ari Alexander, an American Jew, and Maria Ali-Adib a Syrian Muslim, to manage the international Internet-based summer project, which was called Children of Abraham.

Interest in the project from teenagers on six continents exceeded expectations and in July-August 2004, 61 students from 23 countries were selected to participate in what was designed as a one-time project, with the twin goals of providing a transformative experience for young Muslims and Jews to discover one another, and of publicizing the photographs taken of the two religions all over the world so that more adherents of each faith might view the other with more respect and less suspicion.

Based on the success of the summer project, Alexander and Ali-Adib decided to co-found Children of Abraham, Inc. in November, 2004 and broadened the mission beyond the photo project. Children of Abraham was created to foster dialogue between Muslim and Jewish youth via the Internet. Matching gifts were solicited from Epstein and his long-time colleague, Mr. Mohamed Ali Alabbar of Dubai in order to establish an essential organizational precedent whereby funds supporting Children of Abraham would come from a balanced combination of Jewish sources and Muslim sources. Ali-Adib left the organization in September 2005 and was replaced by Gul Rukh Rahman from Pakistan, as Co-Executive Director.

The organization has graduated over 160 students from 43 countries from its online program. Alumni have gone on to host local photo exhibitions, write editorials in their local newspapers and recruit peers for subsequent groups.

Children of Abraham has been featured in media sources in Tunisia, Morocco, Iran, the Netherlands, France, Cyprus, Indonesia and the USA.

The mission is to: “Host the first on-line community for the world’s Jewish and Muslim students to spend time together. Restore a more comprehensive relationship between these two ancient peoples and honor our common heritage, reaffirming the essential principles that lie at the heart of our faiths. Use photography to open up lines of communication between Muslims and Jews by illustrating shared ritual, habits and customs. Harness the power of the internet to enable students in societies that have no members of one group or the other to interact with one another. Provide a virtual laboratory for small numbers of highly talented and motivated students to discover the depths of one another’s religions and to share their findings within their own communities and with other populations around the world.”

The Global Discovery Program (GDP) is an intensive four-month online seminar that is designed to act as an educational gateway to bring together Muslim and Jewish youth from eleven cities across the world.

Source: [http://www.children-of-abraham.org/render/GDP\\_Public/Current\\_GDP/](http://www.children-of-abraham.org/render/GDP_Public/Current_GDP/)

Title: **TV Program: *Building Bridges: Abrahamic Perspectives on the World Today***

Address: 440 Park Avenue South, 4th floor  
New York, NY 10016-8012

Phone: 212-779-3300

Web: <http://www.clal.org>

Description: CLAL stimulates volunteer, professional and rabbinic leadership to build responsive communities across North America. Helps individuals to imagine new Jewish possibilities. Promotes inclusive Jewish communities in which all voices are heard. Convenes interdisciplinary conversations that explore the Jewish and American futures. Enhances Jewish participation in civic and spiritual life in North America.

CLAL - The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership was founded in 1974. A think tank, leadership training institute and resource center, CLAL's activities are dedicated to building a Jewish life that is spiritually vibrant and engaged with the intellectual and ethical challenges of the wider world. CLAL's faculty represents an unusual mix of rabbis from every denomination, and scholars from an array of disciplines.

Working with established and emerging volunteer leaders, rabbis, and Jewish professionals, CLAL has earned a reputation for provocative programming that embodies the principles of pluralism and helps to revitalize institutions.

In early 2006, Rabbi Brad Hirschfield conceived, developed, and was featured in an 18-part series on the role of religion in America today for Bridges Television, the first American Muslim TV Network in English, and the first ever series created by a rabbi for Muslim television. Called ***Building Bridges: Abrahamic Perspectives on the World Today***, the series brought together religious leaders from the three major faiths — Jewish, Christian, and Muslim — to answer the tough questions dividing our country and world. From religion and terrorism to abortion to the role of women, the series asked leaders to probe their own traditions for insights on the big issues to create a new listening and foundation for bridge building.

Source: Materials were provided via email by Judy Epstein, CLAL Director of Public Affairs

Title: ***“Faith Leaders Call on Nation to Help Secure Health Care Coverage for All Americans”***

Address: N/A

Contact: N/A

(A great number of organizations participated)

Description: As part of this campaign, “religious leaders from some of America's most influential faith groups [were] encouraging organizations and congregations to help those among them who do not have health care coverage and tell our nation's leaders to make health care coverage for Americans a top priority.” “Cover the Uninsured Week [was] the largest campaign in history to focus attention on the need to secure health coverage for all Americans – by planning events before, during, and after the Week, May 1-7, 2006. The effort [involved] Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, and Muslim leaders working together to help the uninsured, as they have done historically for the poor, sick, and homeless.”

Source: <http://covertheuninsured.org/media/releases/index.php?ReleaseID=1003>

Title: ***Open Doors, Open Minds***

Address: C/O Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC)

2027 Massachusetts Ave., NW

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: (202) 387-2800

Web: <http://interreligious.rj.org/contact.shtml>

Description: The Commission on Interreligious Affairs of Reform Judaism is dedicated to working with other religious communities on interfaith issues. The Commission is composed of representatives from the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), the North American Federation of Temple Brotherhoods/Jewish Chataqua Society (NFTB/JCS), and the Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ).

Open Doors, Open Minds I is a seven-session adult education curriculum that serves as a foundation for synagogues and churches to engage in dialogue. Its goal is both profound and simple: to foster mutual understanding and appreciation among Jews and Christians and to dispel xenophobia and misunderstanding. Open Doors I is aimed at helping participants understand how faith is actively lived, and how our beliefs, values, hopes, and doubts shape our individual and communal lives. The conversation centers on three essential concerns: A Discovery of Who We Are; A Discovery of What We Think; A Discovery of How We Act. Beginning by establishing a framework of friendship and shared histories, the curriculum then guides participants through a close examination of common texts, a consideration of the importance of Israel, and a commitment to a future of cooperation and understanding.

Source: Brochure of the program emailed by the organization

Title: ***Interfaith Social Programs in Volatile Post-Conflict Zones***

Address: P.O.B. 206, Zur Hadassah 99875  
Israel

Phone: +972 (0)2 - 5336955

Web: [www.icjw.org](http://www.icjw.org)

Description: Established in 1912, the International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW) represents 52 women's organizations in 47 countries around the world working for social justice and welfare for all races and creeds. ICJW provides a voice for Jewish women around the world and a platform for the issues that concern us, our families, and our communities.

ICJW represents Jewish women from all walks of life in many important international forums and is strategically positioned to confront and respond to the concerns of the Jewish community and women in general.

Its objectives are "To promote friendly relations and understanding among Jewish women of all countries. To uphold and strengthen the bonds of Judaism throughout the world. To show solidarity with Israel, and to support the efforts of Israel to secure a just and lasting peace, economic security, social, educational and cultural development. To further the best and highest interests of humanity in the fields of international relations, government, social welfare and education. To co-operate with national and international organizations working for goodwill among all people of the world, and for equal rights for all humanity. To support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations. To encourage each Affiliate to work for the improvement of the social, economic and legal status of all women under Jewish and civil law. To assist affiliates in programme formulation and implementation. To encourage and assist in the education, training and use of volunteers."

The Council helps the organization La Benevolentia with the education of Muslim Roma refugees from Kosovo, especially their children, and they have donated large quantities of clothes and food, as well as organizing lectures about religious tolerance. The League have also put a lot of effort into working together with different organizations for the restitution of property which was confiscated in Communist times in Serbia. Serbia is one of the countries which has no law of restitution, which is a serious problem, and the Jews among others, are pushing the government to bring in such a law, because a lot of property was confiscated. The League works intensively with people with special needs and invalids of all faiths, recognizing their needs and helping them to interact with each other, because illness doesn't discriminate according to faith or nationality. They also help the elderly people in Belgrade's Jewish community, visiting the old age home there before every Jewish holiday

Source: <http://www.icjw.org/showitem.asp?itemid=AffiliateReports&title=Affiliate%20Reports>

Title: ***Christian-Jewish trip to Israel and Palestine in 2005***

Address: N/A

Phone: N/A

(Several organizations participated)

Description: Sixteen Jewish and Christian leaders went on a week-long trip to Israel and Palestine from September 18-23 with members expressing the conviction that "we have demonstrated that Christians and Jews can work together to seek peace even when there is disagreement on specific policies and solutions."

"As a result of these days," delegation members said, "we will now be even more effective advocates for a secure, viable and independent Palestinian state alongside an equally secure State of Israel, affirming the historic links that both the Jewish People and the Palestinian People have to the land."

Delegation members returned promising "to mobilize each of our communities of faith ... in a concerted effort to bring reconciliation and peace to Israelis and Palestinians alike."

"That Jewish and Christian leaders representing their denominations and organizations are going on this trip together is in itself a significant statement of trust and hope," said Dr. Shanta Premawardhana, National Council of Churches USA Associate General Secretary for Interfaith Relations, said when the journey began.

"Many of us have been there before and have seen the realities on the ground and met people who are suffering as well as the religious and political dignitaries. The difference this time is that we are hoping to see and hear with the eyes and ears of the other, those same realities and voices. We are hopeful that the trip will help transform us and our dialogue table."

Source: <http://www.nccusa.org/news/050923ChristiansandJewstogether.html>

Title: ***Save Darfur Coalition***

Address: N/A

Contact: N/A

(Multiple organizations participated)

Description: "United Jewish Communities represents and serves 155 Jewish federations and 400 independent Jewish communities across North America. It reflects the values of social justice and human rights that define the Jewish people. The values of caring that transform lives and perform miracles.



United Jewish Communities represents and serves one of the world's largest and most effective networks of social service providers and programs. Men, women and children – both professionals and volunteers – dedicated to safeguarding and enhancing Jewish life. And to meeting the needs of all people, Jews and non-Jews, wherever they live.

United Jewish Communities – the merger of the Council of Jewish Federations, United Israel Appeal, and United Jewish Appeal – was realized to represent and serve the North American federation system. To put forth a new model of community and philanthropy. To build the framework for new opportunities and new partnerships that will challenge the Jewish people to continue the traditions of education, leadership, advocacy and responsibility that have inspired the world.

Serving the Federation of North America United Jewish Communities plants the seeds for Jewish renaissance and renewal; ensures the Jewish community never waivers on its commitment to provide human services and to advocate for just social policy; and works to continuously strengthen the North American Jewish community's link to Israel and the worldwide Jewish family. While the UJC federation system advocates for Israel and its desire for peace, it remains a non-partisan organization unaligned with any particular political party in the United States or abroad. United Jewish Communities promotes the tolerance, the understanding, and the excitement that create vibrant communities of Jewish learning and growth...and crosses all borders to pursue care for the poor; food for the hungry; and advocacy and compassion for everyone who needs it.

UJC has helped launch the Save Darfur Coalition, an alliance of more than 150 faith-based, humanitarian and human rights organizations with representation from all major faiths and the Sudanese community. The coalition is dedicated to raising public awareness and mobilizing the world community to end the atrocities.

Source: <http://www.ujc.org/page.html?ArticleID=100737>

Title: ***The Centre for the Study of Jewish–Christian Relations***

Address: Wesley House  
Jesus Lane  
Cambridge  
CB5 8BJ  
United Kingdom

Phone: (44) (1223) 741 048

Fax: (44) (1223) 741 049

Email: [cjcrenquiries@woolfinstitute.cam.ac.uk](mailto:cjcrenquiries@woolfinstitute.cam.ac.uk)

Web: <http://www.woolfinstitute.cam.ac.uk/>

Description: The Centre for the Study of Jewish–Christian Relations (CJCR) is an independent, self-financing educational institution dedicated to teaching, research and dialogue in the encounter between Jews and Christians.



Established in 1998, CJCR is one of the world's leading institutes in the study and teaching of all aspects of the encounter between Christians and Jews throughout the ages.

The Centre's flagship academic course is the Master of Studies in the Study of Jewish–Christian Relations of the University of Cambridge. CJCR also contributes to the provision of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, as well as broader-based programmes, such as short courses, which are designed to build interfaith skills for people working in and with faith communities.

Source: <http://www.woolfinstitute.cam.ac.uk/>

Title: ***Engaging America***

Address: American Jewish Committee  
165 E. 56th Street, 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10022

Phone: 212-891-6761

Email: [engagingamerica@ajc.org](mailto:engagingamerica@ajc.org)

Web: <http://www.engagingamerica.org/>

Description: Advancing Interethnic and Interreligious Partnerships: A project of the American Jewish Committee

EngagingAmerica is a new program of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) that boldly reasserts the agency's historic commitment to strengthen mutual understanding among America's diverse ethnic and religious groups as a moral imperative and Jewish commitment to social justice, and a core strategy for safeguarding Jewish life.

With extensive training and resource materials, this initiative empowers AJC members and professional staff to be effective domestic diplomats in an ongoing nationwide project of interethnic and interreligious engagement. Through building knowledge and skills, EngagingAmerica moves the intergroup conversation beyond dialogue to social and political action on behalf of Jews and our neighbors.

The American Jewish Committee has worked since 1906 to safeguard and strengthen Jews and Jewish life worldwide by promoting democratic and pluralistic societies that respect the dignity of all peoples. In a new century of rapid demographic change and a deepening cultural and socio-economic divide we need to strengthen a democratic America. It is our responsibility, as citizens and as Jews, to assure that this nation continues to embrace and draw vitality from her diversity. Amid this diversity, we will depend increasingly on reliable intergroup alliances to help protect Jews and Jewish life in America, in Israel, and throughout the world.

Program Goals

- Strengthen the necessary competence and confidence of Jewish leaders for intergroup engagement in this new era by providing training in advocacy, coalition-building, and the articulation of Jewish values.

- Insure that our leaders gain the requisite knowledge about the key issues of other groups, core tenets of other faiths, and relevant AJC policy positions.
- Increase public support for the Jewish community's issues among ethnic and religious groups, and in alliance with them, advocate for the issues we share.

Source: <http://www.engagingamerica.org/ajc/aboutUs/>

Title: ***International Fellowship of Christians and Jews***

Address: 30 N. La Salle St., Suite 2600  
Chicago, IL 60602-3356

Phone: (800) 486-8844

Email: [info@ifcj.org](mailto:info@ifcj.org)

Web: <http://www.ifcj.org/>

Description: The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews was founded in 1983 to promote understanding between Jews and Christians and to build broad support for Israel and other shared concerns. Our vision is that Jews and Christians will reverse their 2,000-year history of discord and replace it with a relationship marked by dialogue, respect and cooperation.  
24 Years of History

Based in Chicago and Jerusalem, The Fellowship operates under the leadership of Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein and is governed by a board of directors made up of members of both faith groups who share a strong belief in building bridges between the Christian and Jewish communities.

In recent years, The Fellowship has provided millions of dollars to help Jews make aliyah (immigrate to Israel), supply emergency aid in times of crisis in Israel, and support needy Jewish children, families and elderly in distress around the world.

Source: <http://www.ifcj.org/site/PageNavigator/eng/about/>

## **Multi-Religious and Independent**

Title: ***Inter-Religious Organization of Singapore***

Address: Raffles City  
P O Box 712, Singapore 911724

Phone: (065) 6738 4602

Web: <http://www.iro.org.sg>

Description: Objectives of the Inter-Religious Organization, Singapore is to inculcate the spirit of friendship and cooperation among the leaders and followers of different religions; to improve the conditions of the adherents of different religions in generally accepted moral principles; to organize

by lawful and peaceful means a movement to eradicate the common evils prevailing among the mankind; to work for the achievement of peace and goodwill among mankind; to promote mutual respect, assistance and protection among the adherents of different religions; to conduct prayers and meditation for the well being of mankind as often as possible and convenient; to promote in every way comity and cooperation among the followers of different religions for the good of mankind. The activities of IRO are centered on the promotion of inter-faith understanding and services which includes seminars and public talks. And also, IRO attempts to encourage members of its constituent inter-faith group to participate in public campaigns for organ donation, engage in voluntary work for in rehabilitation programmes for drug addicts, the disadvantaged young, the needy and the elderly.

Source: <http://www.iro.org.sg>

Title: ***The Centre for Inter-religious Dialogue***

Address: 595, Ajesa Street  
Off Amino Kano Crescent Wuse II Abuja  
Nigeria

Phone: +234 9 672 30 14

Contact: [dialogue@dialogueng.org](mailto:dialogue@dialogueng.org)

Web: <http://www.dialogueng.org>

Description: The Centre for Inter-religious Dialogue is a non-profit organization whose primary goal is to help bring together the communities in order to promote compassion, cooperation, partnership and community service through interfaith dialog and conversation. The CIRD is dedicated to encouraging the study of the global communities' spiritual traditions from the vantage point of respect, accuracy, and appreciation.

Source: <http://www.dialogueng.org>

Title: ***National Peace Council***

Address: 12/14 Purana Vihara Road  
Colombo 6  
Sri Lanka.

Phone: +94 11 2818344, +94 11 2845127

Contact: [info-npc@sltnet.lk](mailto:info-npc@sltnet.lk), [npc@sltnet.lk](mailto:npc@sltnet.lk)

Web: <http://www.peace-srilanka.org>

Description: NPC's objectives is to facilitate the creation of an inclusive movement for peace; to build a supportive environment, increase political will and capacity for a negotiated settlement; and to addresses issues of reconciliation to enable sustained peace through NPC projects, publications and public events.

Source: <http://www.peace-srilanka.org>

Title: ***The Malaysian Interfaith Network***  
Fax: 603 4251 1990 (Fax)  
Contact: [norcnsul@streamyx.com](mailto:norcnsul@streamyx.com)  
Web: <http://www.malaysianinterfaithnetwork.net>  
Description: The Vision of the Malaysian Interfaith Network (MIN) are primarily three issues: to proactively promote dialogue between faith organizations in Malaysia; to foster better understanding of common concerns and values and areas of contention; to organize specific actions, sharing information, service and vocation. MIN tries to establish a commission on multi-faith education with the aim to replace the system of separate religious and moral classes with an integrated class/curriculum on common values and multi-faith education for all children of all faiths and ethnics.  
Source: <http://www.malaysianinterfaithnetwork.net>

Title: ***World Congress of Faiths***  
Address: c/o 1 Ashbourne Grove,  
London, NW7 3RS  
United Kingdom  
Phone: 020 8959 3129  
Contact: [jtabick@lineone.net](mailto:jtabick@lineone.net)  
Web: <http://www.worldfaiths.org>  
Description: The World Congress of Faiths seeks to bridge the almost unbridgeable: to make bonds of friendship based on knowledge and understanding and to celebrate the differences between religions. While accepting the differences of history and belief between faith communities, we affirm and support each of the faith groups represented at our gatherings. We seek to bring together those who are firm adherents of their own faiths, and who wish to learn from others in a non-judgemental and supportive fashion. In this way, hopefully, we work towards ending the destructive enmity that so tragically dogs the relationships between so many people of faith. The Congress provides a rich variety of programmes from co-sponsoring trips abroad, resident conferences in Britain to evening activities such as our Moral Maze programme in November on medical ethics with an interfaith panel responding to expert witnesses. we also produce a major Journal, InterReligious Insight and an in house communication called 'One Family'.  
Source: Provided by Jackie Tabick, Chair.

Title: ***Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions***  
Address: 70 E. Lake Street, Suite 205

Chicago, IL 60601  
USA  
Phone: (312) 629-2990  
Web: <http://www.cpwr.org>  
Description: The mission of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions is to cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement with the world and its other guiding institutions in order to achieve a peaceful, just, and sustainable world. Over the years, the Council has initiated dialogues and nurtured relationships among people of difference. In doing so the Council has provided a framework for expressing many visions of a just, peaceful and sustainable future. In the process, religious and spiritual communities have discovered a shared commitment to ethical principles. This shared commitment has opened the way for a new era of cooperative action among the world's religious and spiritual communities as well as with the world's other guiding institutions. The well-being of the Earth and all life depends on such a collaboration.  
Source: <http://www.cpwr.org>

Title: ***UNESCO – Division of Cultural and International Dialogue***  
Address: Division of Cultural Policies and International Dialogue  
1, rue Miollis 75732 Paris Cedex 15  
France  
Phone: 33 (0) 1 45 68 42 77  
Contact: [r.guerreiro@unesco.org](mailto:r.guerreiro@unesco.org) (Rosa Guerreiro, Programme Specialist)  
Web: <http://www.unesco.org/culture>  
Description: UNESCO's Interreligious Dialogue programme, an essential component of Intercultural Dialogue, aims to promote dialogue among different religions, spiritual and humanistic traditions in a world where conflicts are increasingly associated with religious belonging. It stresses the reciprocal interactions and influences between, on the one hand, religions, spiritual and humanistic traditions, and on the other, the need to promote understanding between them in order to challenge ignorance and prejudices and foster mutual respect.  
Source: <http://www.unesco.org/culture>

Title: ***Religions for Peace: The European Council of Religious Leaders***  
Address: P O Box 6820  
St. Olavs pl, NO-0130 Oslo  
Norway  
Phone: +47 23353090,  
Contact: [post@ecrl.info](mailto:post@ecrl.info)

Web: <http://www.religionsforpeace.no>  
Description: European Council of Religious Leaders advances common action for peace and reconciliation among Europe's religious communities and their leaders. European Council of Religious Leaders engages the power of existing religious bodies as building blocks for cooperation. ECRL is working to strengthen the relationship and cooperation with WCRP. ECRLs members will have a Council meeting in 2008 in Germany focusing on Anti-Semitism. ECRL support efforts to establish Inter Religious Councils (IRC) on national level in countries in Europe where such structures do not exist. Albania is going to launch their IRC in October 2007. ECRL will in cooperation with WCRP Europe and CAMPANA arrange an Interreligious Encounter in Rovereto in Italy in May 2008. ECRL is involved in and develop projects in Iraq, Sri Lanka, North Korea and East Timor  
Source: <http://www.religionsforpeace.no>

Title: ***The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe***  
Address: Kaerntner Ring 5-7 1010 Vienna  
Austria  
Phone: +43-1-514-36-0  
Contact: [info@osce.org](mailto:info@osce.org)  
Web: <http://www.osce.org>  
Description: The Organization deals with three dimensions of security-the politico-military, the economic and environmental, and the human dimension. It therefore addresses a wide range of security-related concerns, including arms control, confidence-and security-building measures, human rights, national minorities, democratization, policing strategies, counter-terrorism and economic and environmental activities. The followings are some of its interreligious activities: Tolerance Implementation Meeting on Promoting Inter-Cultural, Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Understanding (Almaty, 12 and 13 June 2006); Statement about Interreligious Tolerance and Mutual Respect (Dec. 10, 2006) <http://www.osce.org/item/21571.html>  
Source: <http://www.osce.org>

Title: ***Bangladesh Hindu-Christian-Buddhist Oikya Parishad***  
Address: 5, Tejkuni para, Dhaka-1215. Bangladesh.  
Phone: 9113924  
Fax: 8616248  
Web: <http://bhbcop.org/>  
Description: Also known as the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council, the "Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad, the united association of the religious minorities of Bangladesh i. e. the

Hindus, Buddhists and Christians, formed in May 1988 while the 8th Amendment Bill was placed before the Parliament, has registered a strong protest against the 8th amendment of the Constitution. They have raised the voice of demand that the unconstitutional provision as to the state religion which is violative of the fundamental principle of the Constitution of Bangladesh shall have to be repealed. Bengali nationalism and secularism shall have to be re-established all activities of discrimination, disparity, arrests, torture and oppression on the member of the religious minorities shall have to be stopped.

THE DEMANDS OF THE PARISAD IN THIS PERSPECTIVE ARE: Repeal 5th and 8th Amendments of the Constitution-We don't want a religious state, we want a secular state. We want the re-establishment of a secular and democratic state bereft of all disparities on the basis of Bengali Nationalism in the light of the four fundamental state principles which constitute the basic consciousness of the War of Liberation. We want equal rights in all spheres of life including defense, foreign affairs, government administration, government controlled institutions, state policy making bodies, industries and commerce. Fulfill all the legitimate demands of the aboriginal and tribal communities including preservation of their own culture and heritage and implement CHT peace Treaty. Implement vested property return act with the provision of inheritance. Resist communalism, fundamentalism and fanaticism-stop all kinds of religious discrimination, deprivation atrocities, persecution and harassment.

APPEAL: BANGLADESH HINDU-BOUDDHA-CHRISTIAN OIKYA PARISHAD CALLS UPON CITIZENS OF ALL COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD TO COME FORWARD TO RENDER THEIR ASSISTANCE TO THIS DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT FOR RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN BANGLADESH BY REPEAL OF ALL THE COMMUNITY-INSPIRED BLACK LAWS AND FOR REMOVAL OF ALL TYPES OF TORTURE, INJUSTICE AND DISCRIMINATION.

Source: <http://bhbcop.org/background.html>

Title: ***Institute for Feminism and Religion***

Address: 30, Parkhill Rise  
Kilnarnagh, Dublin 24  
Ireland

Phone: 353-(0)1 4624504

Contact: [instfr@gmail.com](mailto:instfr@gmail.com)

Web: <http://www.instituteforfeminismandreligion.org>

Description: The Institute for Feminism and Religion aims to explore a prophetic approach to feminism and religion, inclusive of many traditions and emerging consciousness in Ireland. It does this by providing

opportunities for women to reclaim religion by engaging theoretically and experientially with the issues of feminist theology, ethics, spirituality and ritual. The most immediate one is an event in November called "Challenging Cultures of Death: Mercy Not Sacrifice." We are hoping that at least part of our discussions will centre on various religions approaches to mercy.

Source: Provided by Mary Condren, Director.

Title: ***United Religions Initiative***

Address: P.O. Box 29242  
San Francisco, CA 94129  
USA

Phone: +1-415-561-2300

Contact: [office@uri.org](mailto:office@uri.org)

Web: <http://www.uri.org>

Description: URI is a global community with spiritual heart. Members from diverse backgrounds pioneer interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding skills. Its core organizational principles include inclusive membership, self-organizing initiatives and decentralized governance. URI is designing an effective communications and knowledge sharing network and exchanging best practices for local, regional and global organizing. It is deepening friendships and fostering solidarity. URI believes that people everywhere when inspired to cooperate for the common good, will find solutions to end religiously motivated hate and violence and will create initiatives that build cultures of peace, justice and healing. URI joins a rapidly growing community of interfaith organizations. Leaders and practitioners are putting their faith into action for global good.

Source: <http://www.uri.org>

Title: ***The United Religions Initiative of Korea***

Address: 301 Uwon Villa 193-120  
Jangchung-dong 2ga, Jung-gu, Seoul 100-856  
Korea

Phone: 82-2-2642-0363,

Contact: [3so@uri-korea.org](mailto:3so@uri-korea.org)

Web: <http://www.uri-korea.org>

Description: The United Religions Initiative of Korea (URI Korea) is a Cooperation Circle (CC) of URI global organization and a growing interreligious community in Korea dedicated to realize the spirit of URI Charter, its purpose is to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create culture of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.

Source: Provided by Ven. Jinwol, Director



Title: ***The World Faiths Development Dialogue***  
Address: WFDD The International Study Centre  
The Precincts Canterbury Kent CT1 2EH  
UK  
Contact: wfdd@btinternet.com  
Web: <http://www.wfdd.org.uk>  
Description: The aim of WFDD is to facilitate a dialogue on poverty and development among people from different religions and between them and the international development institutions. The focus is on the relationship between faith and development and how this is expressed, both in considering decisions about development policy and in action with impoverished communities all over the world. WFDD is focusing on promoting the participation of religious communities in national and international fora on poverty and development. An initiative which should help to achieve this is a series of workshops on the relationship of faith to development. Two (in Ghana and Tanzania) will be focused on Islam and Christianity and the third (in Thailand) on Buddhism. It is hoped that one outcome of the workshops will be some manuals on faith and development.  
Source: <http://www.wfdd.org.uk>

Title: ***Global Ethics and Religion Forum***  
Address: P.O Box 7121  
Orange, California  
92863-7121  
Phone: 714-633-5504  
Contact: [runzo@GERForum.org](mailto:runzo@GERForum.org) or [martin@GERForum.org](mailto:martin@GERForum.org)  
Web: [www.gerforum.org](http://www.gerforum.org)  
Description: The Global Ethics and Religion Forum is an educational, non-profit NGO dedicated to increasing global ethical responsibility. Incorporated in 2001 and receiving US federal non-profit status in 2002, GERF is an international organization based in Southern California. The heart of the organization consists of some 60 distinguished scholars from around the world who provide the ethical and intercultural expertise for the Forum's projects. GERF is guided by a twenty-one member Board of Directors which combines both academic and community/business leaders.  
The scholarly expertise of the Forum is organized into an International Board of Consultants with experts in international law, economics, business and management, literature, agriculture, philosophy and world religions. World traditions like Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Islam, Baha'i, Judaism and Confucianism are currently represented among

Board of Consultants' members residing in China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, The Hague, England, Wales, Canada, and the United States. The Board of Directors also has a rich diversity of experience which includes the presidency of institutes of higher learning, university trusteeship, leadership in financial services and banking, expertise in management, law, medicine and film, as well as corporate ownership and religious leadership.

The Forum promotes global ethical responsibility by addressing specific issues such as human rights and responsibilities, war and reconciliation, race and gender, globalization and economic justice, ecological ethics and global medical issues through an intercultural and interreligious approach. The activities of the Forum are made widely available to the public through conferences, books and film. Forum conferences are open to the public and explicitly organized to make the interchange of ideas across traditions and among disciplines accessible to interested lay people, students as well as community members.

The Forum presents yearly conferences in Southern California and at Cambridge University, and co-sponsors conferences, primarily in Asia. Universities and non-profit organizations in Southern California with which the Forum has partnered include the University of California at Los Angeles; University of California, Irvine; Loyola Marymount University; California State University, Northridge; California Lutheran University; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and Long Beach Memorial Medical Center. Outside Southern California, the Forum has partnered with Marquette University; Cambridge University (Clare Hall), England; Payap University, Chiang Mai, Thailand; and the University of Gujarat, Ahmedabad, India. Many of the participants in these programs have also contributed to two book series. The first is the "Library of Global Ethics and Religion" which is published in Oxford, England and is now in its fourth volume, and the second is a new sequence of books on ethical issues in science, ethics and religion to be published by Cambridge University Press, with a first volume on "Global Medical Ethics."

In the medium of film, the Forum has begun a documentary series, "Patterns for Peace," focusing on local efforts for peace and harmony in specific regions which can be models for a more peaceful global community. The first documentary, "Patterns for Peace: India as a Model for Peace in a Multi-Religious Society," is due out in 2007. A second documentary entitled "The Sacred Planet," will focus on the topic of ecology and global health. Production for "The Sacred Planet" began in the spring of 2007.

With an inclusive and pluralistic orientation, the Global Ethics and Religion Forum neither emphasizes nor excludes the perspective of any particular World Religion, and the Forum endorses no specific political party or political affiliation.

Title: ***Knowledge Center for Religion and Development***  
Address: P.O. Box 19170 3501  
DD Utrecht  
The Netherlands  
Phone: +31 (0) 30 2361500  
Contact: kenniscentrum@religie-en-ontwikkeling.nl  
Web: <http://www.religion-and-development.nl>  
Description: The Knowledge Centre seeks to put into practice the vision that religion is an important factor for sustainable development, international co-operation and civil society building. To reach that aim, the Knowledge Centre makes products and services available to development organizations and their partner-organizations, migrant organizations, academic institutes, media and political organizations. The Knowledge Centre is impartial with regard to specific religious traditions. It works on the basis of the input of various religious traditions and philosophies as well as contributions from different academic disciplines in the Netherlands and abroad.  
Source: <http://www.religion-and-development.nl>

Title: ***The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation***  
Address: Glencree Enniskerry County Wicklow  
Ireland  
Phone: +353 (0) 1 282 9711  
Contact: [info@glencree.ie](mailto:info@glencree.ie)  
Web: <http://www.glencree.ie>  
Description: The core mission of Glencree is to provide services and facilities, which are expressly devoted to the building of peace and reconciliation within communities in both parts of Ireland, in Britain and beyond; to offer programmes and space to help deal with conflict in a democratic society. Enhance understanding of the complex relationships on these islands and to facilitate the further development of pluralism in Ireland; and to contribute to the formation of new relationships and trust building within and between these islands leading to the consolidation of peace. Glencree seeks to make a further contribution to the many efforts that are being made by faith communities in both parts of Ireland and world-wide to understand the role that religion plays in causing and mitigating conflict further develop its programme work with churches in Ireland to include inter-faith and single-identity dimensions offer multi-level solutions that include dealing with requests by clergy for local capacity building.  
Source: Provided by Nicky Butler, Executive Assistant

Title: ***The Interfaith Center of New York***

Address: 475 Riverside Drive  
New York, NY 10115  
USA  
Phone: 212.8703515  
Contact: pr@interfaithcenter.org  
Web: http://www.interfaithcenter.org  
Description: The Interfaith Center of New York is a secular non-profit educational organization. Our goal is to create understanding and respect among the different religious groups of New York City as well as to encourage members of all faiths to get involved in civic participation. We seek to help solving social issues in the fields of education, the legal system, social work, the arts and culture.  
Source: http://www.interfaithcenter.org

Title: ***Interfaith Youth Core***  
Address: 1111 N Wells St., Ste. 501  
Chicago, IL 60610  
USA  
Phone: (312) 573-8825  
Contact: info@ifyc.org  
Web: http://www.ifyc.org  
Description: The Interfaith Youth Core aims to introduce a new relationship, one that is about mutual respect and religious pluralism. Instead of focusing a dialogue on political or theological differences, we build relationships on the values that we share, such as hospitality and caring for the Earth, and how we can live out those values together to contribute to the betterment of our community. The Interfaith Youth Core is creating these relationships across the world by inspiring, networking, and resourcing young people, who are the leaders of this movement. We provide young people and the institutions that support them with leadership training, project resources and a connection to a broader movement.  
Source: http://www.ifyc.org

Title: ***Children of Abraham***  
Address: 307 W. 38th Street Room 1805  
New York, NY 10018  
USA  
Phone: (+1) 212-375-2620  
Contact: info@childrenofabraham.org  
mostafa@childrenofabraham.org (Morocco)  
Web: http://www.children-of-abraham.org

**Description:** The Children of Abraham hosts the first on-line community for the world's Jewish and Muslim students to spend time together; restores a more comprehensive relationship between these two ancient peoples and honor our common heritage, reaffirming the essential principles that lie at the heart of our faiths; uses photography to open up lines of communication between Muslims and Jews by illustrating shared ritual, habits and customs; harnesses the power of the internet to enable students in societies that have no members of one group or the other to interact with one another; provides a virtual laboratory for small numbers of highly talented and motivated students to discover the depths of one another's religions and to share their findings within their own communities and with other populations around the world.

**Source:** <http://www.children-of-abraham.org>

**Title:** ***The Pluralism Project***

**Address:** 1531 Cambridge St.  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
USA

**Phone:** (617) 496-2481

**Contact:** [staff@pluralism.org](mailto:staff@pluralism.org)

**Web:** <http://www.pluralism.org>

**Description:** The overall aims of the Pluralism Project are: to document and better understand the changing contours of American religious demography, focusing especially on those cities and towns where the new plurality has been most evident and discerning the ways in which this plurality is both visible and invisible in American public life; to study the religious communities themselves – their temples, mosques, gurudwaras and retreat centers, their informal networks and emerging institutions, their forms of adaptation and religious education in the American context, their encounter with the other religious traditions of our common society, and their encounter with civic institutions; to explore the ramifications and implications of America's new plurality through case studies of particular cities and towns, looking at the response of Christian and Jewish communities to their new neighbors; the development of interfaith councils and networks; the new theological and pastoral questions that emerge from the pluralistic context; and the recasting of traditional church-state issues in a wider context; to discern, in light of this work, the emerging meanings of religious "pluralism," both for religious communities and for public institutions, and to consider the real challenges and opportunities of a public commitment to pluralism in the light of the new religious contours of America.

**Source:** <http://www.pluralism.org>

Title: ***The Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture***  
Address: 18 Yamazato-chō  
Shōwa-ku Nagoya 466-8673  
Japan  
Phone: (81) 52-832-3111  
Contact: nirc@ic.nanzan-u.ac.jp  
Web: <http://www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/SHUBUNKEN/welcome.htm>  
Description: The Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture was founded in 1976 and incorporated into Nanzan University in 1979. Through its symposia, colloquia, research projects, and a wide array of publications, the community of scholars that make up the Institute is dedicated to promoting dialogue among religions, philosophies, and cultures East and West. Its ample facilities and resource materials continue to attract scholars young and old from within Japan and around the world.  
Source: <http://www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/SHUBUNKEN/welcome.htm>

Title: ***Religious Affairs Offices of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism***  
Address: Ministry of Culture & Tourism Republic of Korea  
110-703, 42, Sejongno, Jongno-gu  
Seoul, Korea  
Phone: (82+2)3704-9320~39  
Contact: [webmaster@www.mct.go.kr](mailto:webmaster@www.mct.go.kr)  
Web: <http://www.mct.go.kr/english/section/bureau/religious.jsp>  
Description: Religious Affairs Offices of Ministry of Culture and Tourism devises and enforces all the religious policies in Korea, and works on dissolving the conflicts among different religious groups. It establishes and promotes a master plan for the religious affair policies; supports activities of the religious groups; authorizes and supports the incorporation of associated religious bodies and their activities; supports cooperative and associated activities among religious groups; supports inter-Korean and international religious exchanges; conducts research and study on religious activities; supports affairs related to the foreign religions; preserves and maintains the traditional Buddhism temples and the Confucian schools; supports transformation of the religious facilities into cultural spaces.  
Source: <http://www.mct.go.kr/english/section/bureau/religious.jsp>

Title: ***The Cape Town Interfaith Initiative***  
Address: 8 Erin Road, Rondebosch,  
Cape Town 7700  
South Africa  
Phone: +27 21 689 8400  
Contact: [info@ctinterfaith.co.za](mailto:info@ctinterfaith.co.za)

Web: <http://www.ctinterfaith.co.za>  
Description: The objectives of CTII are to play a co-ordinating role in strengthening and supporting existing interfaith structures, inter-religious activities and community service programmes and to promote, encourage and make accessible to the broader community of Cape Town the following activities: Engagement and response to social and political issues; Community-based project work; Theological engagement and study; Inter-cultural and cultural activities; Experience of sacred practice and interfaith acts of witness; Sharing of prayer and meditation practice; Opportunities for individual spiritual growth in an inter-religious context  
Source: <http://www.ctinterfaith.co.za>

Title: ***AfricaFiles***  
Address: Room 21  
300 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, ON M5S 1W3  
Canada  
Contact: [interreligious@mafr.ca](mailto:interreligious@mafr.ca)  
Web: [www.africafiles.org/interfaith.asp](http://www.africafiles.org/interfaith.asp)  
Description: AfricaFiles is a network of people committed to Africa through its promotion of human rights, economic justice, African perspectives and alternative analyses. Interfaith Relations is one of the 19 sections of AfricaFiles InfoServ program posted on our web site and distributed by e-mail. It contains articles on dialogue between Christians and Muslims, as well as those dealing with ecumenical relations and indigenous beliefs/practices in relation to Christianity in Africa. The title, Interfaith Relations, shows that its overall, primary concern remains Islamo-Christian dialogue, or shortly interfaith dialogue. It aims at fostering dialogue between Christians and Muslims, mutual growth in understanding, and eliminating stereotypes and barriers to dialogue.  
Source: Provided by James Kirkwood, Administrator

Title: ***Dunedin Abrahamic Interfaith Group New Zealand***  
Phone: 04-479-8497  
Contact: [greg.hughson@otago.ac.nz](mailto:greg.hughson@otago.ac.nz) (Rev. Greg Hughson)  
Web: <http://www.dunedininterfaith.net.nz>  
Description: Dunedin Abrahamic Interfaith Group was formed here in Dunedin in the aftermath of the events of September 11th 2001 out of spontaneous expressions of solidarity and goodwill between leaders of our three faiths, the police and the Dunedin City Council. We exist to express a common heritage and concern, as people of faith in Dunedin. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all Abrahamic faiths. All three can trace their faith back to

Abraham. Ordinary people from all three faiths share a deep desire for peace and justice. We seek to encourage and model friendship and respect for each other.

Source: <http://www.dunedininterfaith.net.nz>

Title: ***The New Zealand Interfaith Group***

Address: PO Box 5428  
Wellington  
New Zealand

Phone: 04-472-2021

Contact: [info@interfaith.org.nz](mailto:info@interfaith.org.nz)

Web: <http://www.interfaith.org.nz>

Description: The New Zealand Interfaith Group has evolved from a variety of interfaith groups that have been active in Wellington over the past 15 years, such as the World Conference on Religion and Peace, and Faith and Community Week. It is in the process of becoming an umbrella group for interfaith groups in other centres around Aotearoa New Zealand. Members of the Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Latter Day Saints, Muslim, and Sikh faiths are represented in the group currently.

Source: <http://www.interfaith.org.nz>

Title: ***Inter-Faith Spiritual Fellowship***

Address: Batu 6, Jalan Puchong  
58200 Kuala Lumpur  
Malaysia

Phone: 603 - 77828303

Contact: [purelife@tm.net.my](mailto:purelife@tm.net.my)

Web: <http://www.surforever.com/insaf>

Description: INSaF is dedicated to providing a platform and means for people of different faiths to come together to promote common principles contained in all religions, thereby fostering unity in diversity. INSaF will act as a study circle of individuals and representatives of religious and spiritual organizations, encourage the study of various scriptures with a view of identifying the common thread in all of them in respect of the universal truths, promote the interaction of people in celebration of their different faiths, reduce misunderstanding and misconceptions with regards to various forms of worship as practiced by Malaysian and thereby promote tolerance and understanding, and pursue the tapping and development of human potential for the greatest good.

Source: <http://www.surforever.com/insaf>

Title: ***InterfaithNews.net***



Address: N/A  
Web: <http://www.interfaithnews.net/wp/about-inn/>  
Description: “Reacting to religious fanaticism and the challenges of advancing and sustaining a more equitable civilization, a global interfaith movement has sprung from the grassroots of religion and spirituality. InterfaithNews.Net (INN) seeks to chronicle this movement by focusing primarily on positive interfaith and religious news, events, and resources.  
INN was founded in 2002 by Joel Beversluis, late of CoNexus Multifaith Media, and Stephen Fuqua. The intent was to create a useful repository for interfaith news and stories on the Internet. With the support of the [United Religions Initiative](#) and the [North American Interfaith Network](#), INN was launched in August of 2002.  
Sadly, [Joel passed from this world](#) in the spring of 2003, leaving behind a loving family and a wonderful body of work and contributions to the interfaith movement (particularly of note is his [Sourcebook for the World’s Community of Religions](#)). The remaining collaborator then took over editing of the site, and continues to this day.  
We are always looking out for volunteer editors and writers, as well as new organizations with which to join in partnership. We’re excited about the future, have some wonderful people involved, and think that INN will grow into a truly valuable and useful resource. Please contact us if you are interested in working with INN in some fashion.  
We are grateful to the United Religions Initiative for their financial support of InterfaithNews.Net and continued assistance in promoting and distributing the bimonthly newsletters.  
Articles and questions can be sent to [editor@interfaithnews.net](mailto:editor@interfaithnews.net).”  
Source: <http://www.interfaithnews.net/wp/about-inn/>

Name: ***Interfaith Sanctuary Housing Services***  
Address: c/o The Interfaith Alliance of Idaho  
1412 W. Idaho, Ste. 100,  
Boise ID 83702  
Contact: 208.368.6772  
Web: <http://interfaithsanctuary.wordpress.com/>  
Description: “Interfaith Sanctuary Housing Services is a collaboration of people of faith and people of conscience who have joined together to shelter and serve individuals and families with children who are experiencing homelessness in Boise, Idaho. Since 2005, Interfaith Sanctuary has operated an emergency winter shelter and has served over 700 men, women and children. Our partners include El-Ada Community Action Partnership, S.H.I.P - Supportive Housing and Innovative Partnerships, The Interfaith Alliance of Idaho and the Interfaith Religious Leaders Network, Catholic Charities of Idaho, and Corpus Christi House.

In November 2005, Interfaith Sanctuary was created in response to a crisis of homelessness in the City of Boise. Community-based organizations that serve people who are homeless reported to a gathering of faith leaders that 250 - 300 homeless individuals were sleeping on the 'streets' and were either unable or unwilling to go to other shelter services in the city. In response, Interfaith Sanctuary opened a temporary emergency shelter, first in a local house of worship and then in a downtown warehouse.

From December 8, 2005 - March 31, 2006, 300 different individuals were served. Of those 300; one-third were women and children. Nearly 75% of the total group had significant alcohol or other drug issues and most needed mental health and/or health assistance. More than 45% of those people served by Sanctuary were employed.

By plan and necessity, the Winter Emergency Shelter was closed on April 1, 2006. When the shelter closed, two-thirds of the people who had been staying at Sanctuary either moved to other shelter services or found housing, typically being assisted by El-Ada Community Action Partnership and S.H.I.P. (Supportive Housing and Innovative Partnerships). The rest returned to the street.

Interfaith Sanctuary opened its doors again on November 1, 2007 for the winter season. For the first month, Sanctuary was hosted by several downtown Boise congregations including Cathedral of the Rockies - First United Methodist Church, St. John's Cathedral and First Congregational United Church of Christ. In December, St. Michael's Episcopal Church invited Sanctuary to use their newly acquired space at the Carnegie Public Library Building. Sanctuary offered services at this location throughout the season until closing on April 1, 2007. During the 2006 - 2007 Winter Sheltering Season, Sanctuary served nearly 400 different individuals with daily averages between 85 - 105.

The Sanctuary board and committee continue work to develop and secure a year-round permanent facility and plan to open our doors again by November 1, 2007."

Source: <http://interfaithsanctuary.wordpress.com/>

Name: ***Interfaith Resources***

Address: 511 Diamond Rd.  
Heltonville, IN 47436

Phone: 800.326.1197

Web: <http://www.interfaithresources.com/index.php>

Description: "Interfaith Resources has developed a wide range of products that celebrate our shared ideals. Use them to create a welcoming atmosphere when people from different backgrounds come together. Check out our interfaith prayer books, posters, stickers, name tags, buttons, T-shirts, pens, lanyards, coffee cups and other ideas. For students of comparative

religion, we have compilations, commentaries and scriptures from most major faith traditions.

Our mission is to bring together a wide range of books and gift items that support universal spiritual ideals. Many of these products are things we design and produce ourselves, while others come from like-minded organizations and publishers. We welcome your suggestions.”

Source: <http://www.interfaithresources.com/index.php>

Name: **3iG**

Address: Keizersgracht 788  
1017 EC  
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Phone: 31 6 4620 6604

Web: [www.3ignet.org](http://www.3ignet.org)

Description: “The mission of 3iG is to contribute to a just and sustainable society through responsible investment in a spirit of genuine interfaith dialogue and co-operation.

3iG has set itself an historic task of shifting the attitudes and investment policies of the major world religions from the tradition of a *via negativa* – not investing in certain arenas because of strongly held views about, for example, alcohol, armaments or interest income – to a *via positiva* – selecting arenas to invest in because the activities thus supported are consistent with faith values and belief.

The Faiths wield enormous economic assets– they manage many tourist sites around the world; they a substantial portion of the habitable land surface of the planet and they administer literally millions of building, community facilities, welfare networks, youth clubs, employment projects, etc. This is largely funded through their historically accrued stocks, shares and land assets.

The Faiths share with large pension funds a long-term perspective on investments unlike the short-term profit orientation of the general market. 3iG is designed to assist the Faiths in facilitating and advancing their engagement in this area and to provide high level research and information to enhance its development.”

3iG “Helps faith investors to more effectively invest their assets in ways that are consistent with the values of the faith and that bring fiscally responsible returns...”

Source: <http://www.3ignet.org/about/history.html>

Title: **Illume**

Address: 102 Union Wharf

Phone: 617-367-6757

Web: <http://www.travelillume.com/contact.html>

Description: “Exploring the Interfaith Heritage of Trinidad & Tobago:  
Trinidad and Tobago have a complex and rich history that stems from their relationship with the British, Dutch, French & Spanish. They were centers of trade for African and East Indian slaves who brought with them their Muslim and Hindu religious heritage.

These two islands today boast a rich multi cultural, religious and racial population that is learning to value its diversity even while struggling to respond to the stresses that that diversity brings.

Illume, a leader in developing innovative overseas programs, offers this program as an opportunity to study the history and legacy of slave trade in the Caribbean, the beliefs and practices of Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities there, and to explore and imagine different models for thinking about interfaith and interracial relations in an increasingly interdependent world.

This program includes a program manager that coordinates the various activities and logistics of your groups travel, engages local experts to talk about diverse religious beliefs and traditions, and be your host in this rich and exotic land. You’ll be treated to quality accommodations and professional service throughout the program.

Source: [www.travelillume.com/programs/trinidad\\_tobago.html](http://www.travelillume.com/programs/trinidad_tobago.html)

Name: ***The Interreligious Peace Sports Festival***

Address: N/A

Phone: (800) 715-7433

Web: [www.ipsfestival.org](http://www.ipsfestival.org)

Description: IPSF utilizes the globally popular medium of sports to promote cooperation between young athletes of all religions.

While the world longs for peace, our religious, national and cultural differences have at times allowed misunderstanding, suspicion and violence to flourish instead.

The Interreligious Peace Sports Festival brings youth from all faiths and nations together to compete honorably in their sport, and to share their faith and cultural heritage with others. The vision of IPSF combines the love of sports with cultural programs that uplift each other’s traditions in an international athletic arena, setting a long term vision for athletes to become young ambassadors for peace.

Source: <http://www.ipsfestival.org/media.php>

Title: ***The Center for Religious Architecture***

Address: 19 S LaSalle St #604

Chicago, IL 60603

Phone: 312-580-1050

**Description:** The Center for Religious Architecture (CRA) was founded in 2003 by Suzanne Morgan to promote interfaith education and amity through the understanding of religious architecture. The CRA began as a response to the events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent climate of social tension and fear. In an era in which confusion, division and disagreement based in different faiths has caused so much grief and damage, it becomes imperative for each of us to ask – what can we do to bridge the gaps that divide us?...

The CRA approaches interfaith education through the neutral path of religious architecture, and begins the conversation with an exploration of sacred spaces in different traditions. Without promoting any single faith or tradition, the CRA utilizes the universal language of religious architecture, from ancient to modern times, as an educational means to foster reciprocal respect, awareness and appreciation of the different traditions that comprise our pluralistic society. ...

**Current programming includes:** Tours of Religious Structures: Chicago is a city rich in architecture and home to a variety of extraordinary religious structures. In 2006, the CRA implemented a program of walking tours of religious structures in Chicago. The organization is developing relationships with several non-Christian spaces of worship in order to include a wider representation of different faiths in future tours, and will partner with other interfaith organizations to expand the educational impact of these tours.

**Oral History Project:** The CRA is in the preliminary planning stages of coordinating a multigenerational oral history project in one of Chicago's most religiously diverse Wards. A steering committee of architectural, theological and ethnographic scholars will help to shape this project, and tours of neighborhood religious structures will be incorporated into the project throughout the course of the school programming year.

**Internships:** The CRA is partnering with local educational institutions to provide internships to students of architecture, theology, and other related fields.

**Participation in Interfaith Events:** the CRA provides programming to major events and symposia that focus on interfaith issues and education. The CRA will participate in the 2009 Council for a Parliament of World Religions, and actively seeks partnerships with other Chicago institutions for which interfaith understanding is a priority.

**Public Lectures:** the CRA presents lectures about religious architecture at public venues such as Rotary meetings, special luncheon series, and educational or religious institutions.

**Source:** Provided by Rachel Combs, Director of Development, Center for Religious Architecture

- Title: ***Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies***  
Graduate School, Gadjah Mada University
- Address: Pascasarjana UGM Building Level 3, Jln. Teknik Utara, Pogung,  
Yogyakarta, Indonesia 55281
- Phone/Fax: 62-274-544976
- Contact: zainbagir@ugm.ac.id
- Description: The Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS) of the Graduate School, Gadjah Mada University was established in 2000. Since its beginning, CRCS has been giving a unique space for people from different backgrounds of religion, ethnic and nationalities to engage and experience diversity as well as to learn and take benefit from diversity to develop mutual understanding and cooperation. CRCS is both a research center as well as a degree-conferring academic institution at Masters level. In both these two main endeavors, it seeks to combine academic activities with public outreach and engagement. In its broadest terms, CRCS seeks to encourage understanding between people of different cultural and religious traditions, not only through "dialogues", but also meaningful engagements with shared problems.
- The Center was established with main supports from Indonesian Ministry of Education, Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, and Temple University, USA. It started with a Master Degree in religious studies. Along with the extension of its activities and concerns, it held partnerships with local and international foundations and universities. Among them are the Asia Foundation (media program, seminars and pluralism advocacy), the John Templeton Foundation (research, conferences, workshops, and publications), Islamic World Call Society (student scholarship), Henry Luce Foundation (student exchange fellowship), US Institute of Peace (research on higher religious education in Indonesia), European Social Science Java Network (workshops), Temple University, Florida International University, and University of California-Santa Barbara (student and faculty exchange), and ISIM Nederland (workshop)
- In this partnership, CRCS held various programs to provide a strong academic base to foster interreligious dialogue and cooperation, and to generate public concerns in promoting a just, tolerant and democratic society. The programs include a range of activities including international student exchange, research, conference, workshop, seminar, dialogue, radio and TV talk shows, focused group discussion, and publications (book and bulletin). For those programs it has worked with governmental offices, NGOs, academic institutions, diverse religious bodies, as well as interested individuals.
- Source: Provided by Dr. Zaenal Abidin Bagir

Title: ***The World Bank: Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics***

Address: 1818 H Street  
NW Washington, DC  
20433 USA

Phone: 202-458-9377

Fax: 202-522-7524

Description: The World Bank is committed to working with a variety of development partners, in order to make development more efficient, effective, and relevant to the lives of poor people the world over. The work of the World Bank on faith and development issues is led both by a small unit in the Bank itself, called the Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics, and an affiliated but independent entity, the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), based at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University.

The World Bank's work on faith and development began a decade ago and focuses on catalyzing dialogue with the world's faith leaders and institutions who are working on development and poverty issues. This work is premised on the recognition that faith leaders often have deep knowledge of and insights about development issues, as well as a powerful moral concern to fight poverty. They live and work in poor communities, where strong local ties, moral authority, and a wealth of experience can often give them unique understanding.

The World Bank's work with faith communities is evolving, and to date has focused on partnerships, mutual learning, dialogue, and knowledge generation. Areas of focus have included HIV/AIDS and environment, as well as health, education, youth, conflict, and finance. Work has taken the form of formal structured dialogue, workshops, conferences, and day to day communication with faith leaders.

Critical to the World Bank's work in this area has been the development and maintenance of partnerships with global institutions, including the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, Religions for Peace, and URI, where potential overlaps on the development agenda have particular importance.

Intensively prepared meetings of faith and development leaders, co-chaired by the World Bank president and global religious leaders, have also been cornerstones of the World Bank's work. These meetings include notably the faith and development leaders meeting in 2002 in Canterbury and in 2005 in Dublin, both meetings with the theme of engaging faith partnerships in support of the Millennium Development Goals.

The World Bank has also focused particular attention on both existing and potential roles of faith leaders and institutions on HIV/AIDS. Direct work has focused on HIV/AIDS as an urgent and important area of linkage, involving notably organization of workshops in Africa and writing case studies of country experience.

Inside the World Bank, work has focused on supporting World Bank management in its work with faith communities and connecting development practitioners in the World Bank with faith leaders and institutions within common areas of focus. There is also a constant flow of communication from outside the Bank from faith leaders and institutions. This has led to a long menu of speaking engagements, written contributions, catalytic work to bring parties together or resolve conflicts, and participation in outside events with a learning objective.

Source: Provided by Marisa B. Van Saanen, Faith Liaison, Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics

Title: ***Immortal Chaplains: "The Prize for Humanity"***

Address: Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Contact: 612-272-9109

Description: In 1948 a US Postage stamp was issued in memory of four "Immortal Chaplains" who gave up their life jackets on a sinking troopship the night of Feb 3rd 1943 so others might live. They were of different faiths - Jewish, Catholic and Protestant - and the stamp proclaims their self-sacrifice as "Interfaith in Action".

I am nephew to one of them, and together with the Rabbi's daughter and widow (and other survivors) formed this foundation in Minnesota in 1997. It's main purpose was to preserve their legacy of Interfaith compassion for others thru the presentation of "The Prize for Humanity - given to those who risked all to protect others of a different faith or ethnicity." We also created other means of telling the story thru books, video and radio documentaries, etc. In 2005 we moved the foundation to the Queen Mary and built a Memorial Sanctuary on the bow of that historic former WWII troopship where the story is told 24/7 in artifact displays and audio presentation.

Source: Provided by David P. Fox, Director, Immortal Chaplains Foundation

Title: ***Association of Women from Romania***

Address: P.O.Box 80 Postal Office 37

Bucharest, Romania

Tel/Fax: 4 021 31 59 859

Contact: afr@opensys.ro

Description: I'm writing this comment from behalf of the Association of Women from Romania, headed by Liliana Pagu as president, Clementina Timus responsible for international relationships. The majority of the women from our association are orthodox, but the religion is not the main topic of discussion in our meetings. The association of women are mainly involved in social and cultural problems, we have often guests from different countries and the discussions concern our experience in different



situations. We are partners in international projects, so we meet people of different other religions and it is interesting to know their traditions we visit different churches and sometimes assist at the religious services.

It is important to stress that Romanians are a religious people and specially women respect the old traditions: assist at the religious service, respect and help other people and poor people, children. Generally at different churches there are monks and people bring goods (clothes and food) and this is shared to poor people. I have to add that if in the communist time the religion was not much encouraged since the communist leaders used to declare they are atheist nowadays the leaders use to assist at the religious services mainly at major occasions: Christmas, Easter etc.

A special feature of Romania could be considered the large number of churches and monasteries, as in the old times when this part of Europe the entrance gate of Europe had been the scene of barbaric invasions the local leaders used to erect a church as mercy to the God for protection and victory in the war. These churches are wonderful painted in frescos inside and outside as well and they are preserved over hundreds of years: these churches represent a touristical attraction but in the same time it is necessary to add that around the monasteries there were real cultural centers, as the first printing books have been edited inside the churches. The rich people used to offer properties to the monasteries since some of them at the end of the life used to become monks and live a very simple way. Nowadays almost all the monasteries have been restored and there are organized different pilgrimage, people to visit and pray. The guides are very well informed and could describe the history of the places, the art of the paintings and the evolution in time of the church. People living in the monasteries are hard working people able to produce everything necessary to survive and make efficient the place: people use to buy different objects worked in the monasteries ( paintings, tissues, ceramics, painted eggs, small jewelries, books, prayer books) etc. The monks work the vegetable gardens and protect the bees obtaining the honey, they sell.

In our association we invite women of other religions as “Muslim sisters” or Iranian women and they describe their traditions and sometimes offer traditional foods. Their religion is respected by the other women and there are never discussions about differences.

The Association seeks to develop: a community center to support the disable persons with social difficulties, poor families having many children; a center for education of abandoned children; and a center for counseling the victims of the violence

Source: Provided by Clementina Timus

Title: ***Centre for Inter-Faith Studies at the University of Glasgow***  
Address: Department of Theology and Religious Studies

University of Glasgow  
4 The Square  
Glasgow G12 8QQ  
United Kingdom

Phone: 0044-141-330 2501  
Contact: P.Schmidt-Leukel@arts.gla.ac.uk  
Web: <http://www.religions.divinity.gla.ac.uk/Centre-Interfaith>

Description: In 2001 the University of Glasgow established within the Department of Theology and Religious Studies the Centre for Inter-Faith Studies. The Centre is closely connected to the Chair of World Religions for Peace, currently held by Dr. Perry Schmidt-Leukel, Professor of Systematic Theology and Religious Studies, and an expert in Buddhist-Christian relations. Prof. Schmidt-Leukel is also the Director of the Centre.

The purpose of the Centre is to develop courses on undergraduate and postgraduate level within the realm of inter-faith relations and to enable students from various backgrounds to carry out research projects with an impact on Inter-Faith issues.

Since its establishment the Centre has been actively involved in the organisation of a number of conferences: A multi-religious conference on Global Ethic, Glasgow Oct. 2001; The 5th conference of the European Network of Buddhist-Christian Studies, Samye Ling (Scotland), May 2003; a multi-religious symposium on the pluralist theology of religions, Birmingham, Sept. 2003; an expert symposium on criteria of inter-religious assessment in Basel/Switzerland (in co-operation with the University of Basel), Oct. 2004; the 6th conference of the European Network of Buddhist-Christian Studies, St. Ottilien (near Munich/Germany), June 2005; an expert symposium on multi-religious identity in Basel/Switzerland (in co-operation with the University of Basel), April 2007; the 7th conference of the European Network of Buddhist-Christian Studies, Salzburg/Austria, June 2007.

The Centre has also established the “Gerald Weisfeld Lectures” – a biannual series of public lectures on inter-faith issues.

Source: Provided by Dr. Perry Schmidt-Leukel

Title: ***Pakistan Council for Social Welfare & Human Rights***  
Address: Muradia Road, Near Makki Masjid,  
Model Town Sialkot-51310  
Pakistan

Phone: 92-52-3563809  
Fax: 92-52- 4588276  
Contact: [pcswhr@brain.net.pk](mailto:pcswhr@brain.net.pk)  
Web: [www.pcswhr.com](http://www.pcswhr.com)

Description: Pakistan Council for Social Welfare & Human Rights (PCSW&HR) a Muslim dominated Civic Society Organization in Pakistan was formed in 1992 with the aimed to protect the Human & Minority Rights and to create Social Harmony among the follower of the different religions living in Pakistan especially Islam and Christianity that is leading religion minority in Pakistan and to also create awareness among the Muslims and Christians in Pakistan, to respect others and believe that sharing our values and wisdom can lead us to act for the good of all.

Although it has been realized since very long time that interfaith harmony should be created but since last two decade particularly after the 9/11 & 7/7 incidents in the world while keeping in view the scenario of world to create harmony among the different religions has been made the need of hour. Since its establishment PCSW&HR arranged numbers of seminars, workshops, walks, consultations, community development work with the collaboration of different Church and Multi Faith Organizations to create practical examples of interfaith understanding and harmony to create awareness among the general public for Durable Peace, Social Justice, Religious Tolerance and Human Rights of the followers of all faiths should work together.

PCSW&HR also presented the model in practical to work together with the communities groups from others religions in various projects completed by the PCSW&HR with the Collaboration of United Nations Children Fund UNICEF, Govt. of Pakistan, Sialkot Chamber of Commerce Industry etc like Universal Primary Education, Elimination of Child Labor from all Hazardous Occupations, Early Child Care for Development, Registration at Birth, formal and non formal education, Capacity building of youth and adolescents with the methodology of the joint planning and action as per religious traditions of the both religions at top level and implementation with the involvement of the people from different religions in our all projects remained very fruitful and result oriented and surely this is unique pattern in Pakistan.

These projects were positively recognized by the UN authorities and other International and local forums, Media & beneficiaries of the projects and these projects were also result oriented in the sense of the closeness of the followers of the different religions where both were jointly planning implementing and owning the community development projects. As Muslim dominating Organization actual Islamic traditions and teachings compels us to work with the followers of the other religions on the common issues like human development, human rights, justice, equality and co-existence at all levels and so many religious examples are available in this regard in the Islamic old and new traditions and history.

We would like to quote one of our current example which reflects the interfaith harmony due to sincere efforts of PCSW&HR. After the worst ever earthquake of South Asian History occurred in Pakistan & Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) on 8th October 2005 PCSW&HR did the

massive work for the earthquake victims in shape of provision of immediate relief, basic commodities and after that under rehabilitation process provided permanent shelters, Children and Public Parks to the earthquake victims in Districts Bagh, Rawalakot (Poonch) and Muzafarabad AJK with the collaboration of different National and International Christian dominate and Church Organizations As since the earthquake happened in Pakistan & AJK PCSW&HR with the collaboration of different organizations belonging to different religions particularly Muslims and Christians is busy for the rehabilitation of earthquake victims purely on the basis humanity without any kind of discrimination of color, race, religion and nation which caused the promotion of interfaith harmony and socio economic inter religious co-existence at global level which is need of hour for the global peace, equality, justice and sustainable human development at all levels.

By the efforts of PCSW&HR now its has been really realized through out Pakistan Particularly in the Project Areas of PCSW&HR in AJK which is one of influenced Area of Pakistan by the Muslim Extremists political and religious militants Groups and in AJK there is not even a single person that represents any other religion and due to this people of AJK had not any chance to interact with the followers of others religions and we may say that people of AJK were isolated with the followers of others religions at local level, but after the joint work of rehabilitation for them they people have realized all religions teach that the followers of all religions should work together for the suffering humanity and harmony different religions which is surely positive change and great success.

During the PCSW&HR rehabilitation work various time so many representatives of our counterparts from Pakistan and abroad included Priests, religious leaders (male & female) from the Muslim and Christian communities jointly visited the working area in earthquake hit areas and every time they have been warmly welcomed by the local community and with the passage of time their respect, regard, circle of friend have been expanded more and more, the main reason behind that people of AJK have find out although there is difference of religions among us but we can work together for the social development, combating of human problems and peace at global level and regional level.

Source: Provided by Muhammad Ijaz Noori, Chairman, Pakistan Council for Social Welfare & Human Rights

Title: ***Two Rivers Interfaith Ministry***  
Address: Eugene, Oregon  
Phone: 541-914-2614  
Web: [www.interfaith Eugene.org](http://www.interfaith Eugene.org)

**Description:** Two Rivers Interfaith Ministries began as a dream in the heart of a soul longing for peace, was brought into being by a group of dedicated individuals whose desire it was to bring people together in acceptance, understanding and cooperative service toward that end. TRIM, whose mission statement follows, has now been active for approximately 13 years in the city of Eugene, OR and its surrounding communities.

Our mission is to support Lane County's diverse faith communities by exploring spiritual concerns and promoting dialog and education with mutual respect and without compromising the principles and practices of individual beliefs.

From this dedication to understanding acceptance has come several activities within the community that continue to expand the scope of awareness of TRIM and its goals. These include, among others, LIFE (Lane Institute of Faith and Education) which offers classes; a Heart-To-Heart Column which appears once a week in the local newspaper in which people of various faiths have an opportunity to share meaningful experiences of their faith journey; participation in the Season For Non-Violence by offering city/county-wide activities in honor of that time of year; concerts; prayer services; panels; guest speakers; support for local faith groups who experience the challenge of threatening activities designed to dishonor them; service projects; TV presentations; service in community organizations and coalitions; and various social activities and discussion groups.

As TRIM's members participate in various activities, it becomes clear that the message it brings is one that is welcomed, supported and is of service to the community. This makes it, as stated by one member of the community, "A vital part of the heartbeat of our community as we work toward a better way of being together in family, in community and in the world."

**Source:** Sherry D. Lady

**Title:** *Religions for Peace*  
**Address:** 777 United Nations Plaza, 9th Floor  
New York NY 10017  
**Phone:** 212-687-2163  
**Fax:** 212-983-0098  
**Web:** [www.religionsforpeace.org](http://www.religionsforpeace.org)

**Description:** Founded in 1970 as an interfaith response to the Cold War, Religions for Peace is now the world's largest non-sectarian coalition that advances multi-religious cooperation for peace. Through its global network of seventy inter-religious councils and bodies—as well as four regional inter-religious councils in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America—Religions for Peace innovatively harnesses the long-established but largely untapped power of religious leaders, women and youth of faith,

and religious communities. These councils are served by the organization's seniormost governing body, the World Council, which has fifty senior religious leaders from the world's diverse faith traditions—Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Indigenous, Sikh, Jain, and Zoroastrian.

Religions for Peace has most powerfully affected positive change by building, equipping, and networking its global network of “inter-religious councils.” Religions for Peace believes that peacebuilding takes many forms, including conflict transformation, poverty and disease alleviation, and building harmonious and just societies. Please find following just a few brief examples from its recent work around the world:

Global: Approximately every five years, Religions for Peace convenes a World Assembly to directly address urgent issues and forge a concrete action plan. In August 2006 the Eighth World Assembly was held in Kyoto, Japan, where 800 religious leaders from a hundred countries agreed to confront violence together and committed to advancing a notion of “shared security,” whereby everyone is responsible for the safety of the other. In addition, Religions for Peace convened multi-religious representatives from Sri Lanka, Sudan, Palestine/Israel, and the Korean Peninsula to develop collaborative plans to transform conflict in these deeply troubled regions; trained and equipped religious leaders to become front-line actors in the fight against poverty and disease in support of the UN's Millennium Development Goals; mobilized women of faith at their own pre-Assembly; and launched a global youth network. Many individuals represent Religions for Peace at the global level; for example, H.E. Dr. Mustafa Cerić of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Hercegovina was an invited speaker at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., in 2007 and United Methodist Bishop Joseph Christian Humper of Sierra Leone made a presentation at the United Nations Tripartite Forum in 2006.

Middle East: Just two weeks after the occupation of Baghdad in 2003, Religions for Peace met with senior religious leaders in Iraq and laid the groundwork for their first face-to-face meeting in decades. During that meeting, Iraqi religious leaders requested that Religions for Peace help them build their own inter-religious council. Iraqi religious leaders—Sunni, Shiite, and Christian—have taken promising steps to advance desperately needed religious cooperation. To that end, Religions for Peace has organized their discussions nine times in such safe havens as England, Jordan, South Korea, and Japan; most recently, they gathered in Oslo, Norway, in December 2006.

Africa: Religions for Peace has accomplished some of its strongest work in Africa in the areas of conflict transformation and HIV/AIDS. Religions for Peace has built mechanisms of multifaith cooperation in countries in conflict, providing relevant conflict-resolution training and establishing substantive partnerships with other faith communities, secular

organizations, and governments. Religions for Peace has worked successfully in Africa's areas of crisis, including Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Northern Uganda, Rwanda, Congo, Ethiopia, and Eritrea; in February, Religions for Peace co-sponsored historic talks between Christian and Muslim leaders in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, regarding the resurgence of violence in Somalia. Religions for Peace is a founding partner of the Hope for African Children Initiative (HACI) and has formed key partnerships with such organizations as UNICEF to confront the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia.

Latin America and the Caribbean: Women of faith have tremendous potential to ameliorate the suffering caused by war, poverty, and disease. To harness this capacity while respecting different faith traditions, Religions for Peace has built and equipped women of faith networks and mainstreamed them into its inter-religious councils. This first-ever Global Women of Faith Network—and its four regional networks—was launched in 2001 to bring together more than 1,000 women of faith organizations from all over the world. The network has recently made tremendous strides in Latin America and the Caribbean, where women of faith have been mobilized to address such issues as rural women's poverty, domestic violence, and maternal mortality.

Asia: Religions for Peace has worked through its affiliated national and regional bodies in Asia to transform conflict and build peace in the region. Religions for Peace affiliates in North and South Korea have undertaken multi-religious dialogue for confidence-building and reconciliation since 1990s, while senior religious leaders in Sri Lanka have engaged in high-level negotiations to resolve their country's ethnic conflict, most recently at the World Assembly in August 2006. Religions for Peace partnered with UNICEF to develop the South Asian Inter-religious Council on HIV/AIDS, mobilizing religious communities in eight countries to provide prevention training and care for children affected by HIV/AIDS. Buddhist, Muslim and Christian communities in Cambodia have jointly built an inter-religious council to promote post-conflict social reconstruction through non-violence education and conflict resolution training, and inter-religious conflict resolution efforts have been undertaken by our Indonesian affiliates.

As religion is increasingly misused as a reason for violence, there has never been a greater need for multi-faith cooperation. For thirty-seven years, Religions for Peace has provided religious communities with the mechanisms, training, and resources essential for them to advance peace through common action and dialogue.

Source: Provided by Andrea Louie, Communications Manager, Religions for Peace

Title: ***World Council of Religions for Peace in Croatia***

Address: Marticeva 43, 10000  
Zagreb, Croatia

Phone/Fax: 00 385 1 4617 687

Description: Croatia is a country in SE Europe, population 4.5 million, and the predominant religion is Roman Catholic (85%). However, there are a lot of minorities, Orthodox, various Protestant churches, Jews and Muslims. All of them are represented in our chapter, and there is a spirit of common respect, prayer and wish to work together in peace.

I introduced WCRP to Croatia in 1989, when I came back from Belgium where I was involved in WCRP. We first came to Split, a city in mid-Dalmatia, and were welcomed by the media. The journalist was a Muslim lady who welcomed us as 'apostles of peace'.

After that we established our organization in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. In 1991 we were recognized by WCRP Europe as an individual chapter. The Republic of Croatia also officially recognized us and approved our Statute on mutual respect and work for peace in Croatia and the world.

Our work comprises some important events, such as a monthly forum on topical matters of religious and social life, with prominent speakers. We publish our quarterly, the 'Mirotvorni Izazov' (Peacemaking Challenge), with contributions on the life and work of our chapter and events in Croatia and the world.

Every year we commemorate the UN Human Rights Day on December 10, at the Concert Hall of the Croatian Music Institute, where all religious leaders in Zagreb come to pray to the God of Peace to realize the just peace and human life of dignity, both in this country and in the world. This event is also accompanied by a concert of religious choirs, ballet by the Jewish youth community with religious contents, the spiritual songs of the 'Arabesques' - the Muslim girls' choir. The whole event lasts about two hours, and is covered by the media (press, radio, TV). The event takes place before a numerous audience. The Chapter is led by religious leaders and their delegates, together with representatives of different religions.

Symposia are a very important aspect of our work. So far we have had eight of them. The first was in 1999, and the topic was the relation of Catholics and Muslims in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and was very successful. We have also had symposia on cooperation between the University of Heidelberg and churches in SE Europe; on ecology; on globalization and the rights of small nations, on the mentality in Croatia before our accession to the European Union; on university education; on the contemporaneity of dialogue; on religion and tourism in Croatia. We are now preparing a symposium (on September 27) on the role of Croatia in the United Europe. The organizers of the symposium are WCRP Croatia, Croatian Government and the European Commission. The above symposia



are internationals, with the participation of the Croatian Government, as well as the representatives of the EU, the European Commission, and the EU Economic Counsellor. The impact of these symposia is important because they are covered by the media. This is how Croatia is preparing to join the EU and its role as the leader of peace in SE Europe and the world.

Our work is voluntary, sacrificing, without any remuneration, with numerous sacrifices and prayers to the Almighty to help us and bless us as the apostles of peace.

Source: Provided by Iskra Pavlovic

Title: ***Fellowship in Prayer***

Address: 291 Witherspoon St.  
Princeton, New Jersey 08542

Phone: 609-924-6863

Web: [www.sacredjourney.org](http://www.sacredjourney.org)

Description: Fellowship in Prayer is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote the practice of prayer, meditation and service to others across all faith traditions to help bring about a deeper spirit of unity among humankind. Sacred Journey, the 48 page multifaith journal of Fellowship in Prayer, is published six times per year. It features articles, poetry, prayers and photographs that convey a spiritual orientation to life. Religious leaders and ordinary people of faith are among the pool of contributing writers who share their spiritual insights, practices and beliefs.

In addition to publishing this unique journal, Fellowship in Prayer partners with other organizations and takes leadership for fostering interfaith prayer and dialogue. Journal submissions and subscriptions, conferences, retreats, presentations, interfaith gatherings, and prayer are the specific interests of Fellowship in Prayer.

Source: Provided by Janet Haag, Managing Director, Fellowship in Prayer

Title: ***The Week of Global Interfaith Dialogue***

Address: Global Family for Love and Peace  
46-60 156th Street  
Flushing, NY 11355

Phone: 718 353-7398

Fax: 718 874-6892

Web: [www.gflp.org](http://www.gflp.org)

Description: The fifth annual Week of Global Interfaith Dialogue will take place around the world from September 15-21 to support the United Nations International Day of Peace. On one day during this week individuals and organizations are encouraged to share the values common to all.

The dialogues build a critical mass of positive energy and unity to facilitate a greater understanding of our interconnectedness and of our responsibility for each other. The dialogues need not be elaborate or formal as the purpose is to bring people together to share common traditions and to work toward a more peaceful and cooperative future. In previous years the Week of Global Interfaith Dialogue had been celebrated in Iran, India, Israel, Jordan, Pakistan, Mozambique, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Australia, Taiwan, Finland, the Philippines, the UK, and in many locations in the United States.

The United Nations General Assembly declared that the International Day of Peace be observed on September 21st as "... a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and people to honor a cessation of hostilities." in the words of Dharma Master Hsin Tao, the founder of Global Family for Love and Peace and the featured presenter at the dialogue held at the United Nations, these dialogues create a "unity and friendship that serve as the foundation for future cooperation."

In accordance with the philosophy of respect for all faiths, acceptance of all cultures, and love for all life, GFLP is dedicated to building a harmonious world through promoting values education, organizing and directing activities for young people in the field of social service, and sponsoring interfaith dialogues. A non-profit, tax-exempt NGO, GFLP is associated with United Nations Department of Public Information. GFLP was honored to be one of the primary sponsors of the 55th Annual DPI/NGO Conference held at United Nations headquarters in New York City and the Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue Series that included the Conference on Global Ethics and Good Governance held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

The Week of Global Interfaith Dialogue is also a presentation of the Global Family for Love and Peace Cooperation Circle ([www.uriccs.org](http://www.uriccs.org)), one of the over 300 cooperation circles formed in conjunction with the United Religions Initiative. Through the Cooperation Circles, people of different traditions come together to initiate acts of interfaith cooperation. GFLP is one of the partners of We, The World's 11 Days of Global Unity, whose mission leading up to the International Day of Peace is to create a culture of peace and celebrate a sustainable future, and is a member of the NGO Planning Committee for the International Day of Peace.

Source: Provided by Laurence Singer

Title: ***International Council of Christians & Jews and its Abrahamic Forum***

Address: Martin Buber Haus  
Happenheim, Germany

**Description:** The International Council of Christians & Jews was founded in the light of the experience of the Holocaust. It consists of over 30 member organizations in Europe, North America, Israel, South America and Australia/New Zealand. The ICCJ sponsors publications, small seminars and an annual major conference on Christian-Jewish relations which in recent years included some programming on Christian-Jewish-Muslim relations. On several occasions the annual conference has been done totally on a trilateral basis. Recent conferences sites have included Montevideo, Aachen, Utrecht, Chicago and this year Sydney. The ICCJ has worked with the World Council of Churches on joint programming, including a seminar at the mostrecent Global Assembly of the WCC in Porto Alegre, Brazil and a consultation on the Council's Faith & Order Commission's document on the Church. The Council maintains the most comprehensive website of documentation on C-J and C-J-M relations in some seven languages. It also has a periodic women's conference and annual Young leadership Conf. The Young Leadership Group within ICCJ is trilateral in nature. ICCJ organized a seminar on Christian-Jewish Relations and implications for the wider interreligious dialogue at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Barcelona, in 2004.

I have particularly learned two things from my forty years of dialogue work: (1) the centrality of personal encounter over merely textual discussions. We may not always have the precise language to express the relationship between and among religious. But having experienced the spirituality of the religious other we know that certain language from the past is no longer acceptable; (2) for authentic dialogue each religious tradition must be prepared to critique its history of contribution to religious violence. We can never pretend that our respective tradition is free of such violence and only critique "the other" on this point.

**Source:** Provided by John T. Pawlikowski, OSM, Ph.D.; Director, Catholic Jewish Studies Program, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago; President, International Council of Christians & Jews and its Abrahamic Forum

**Title:** ***The Interfaith Encounter Association***

**Address:** P.O. Box 3814  
Jerusalem, Israel, 91037

**Phone:** 02-651-0557

**Web:** [www.interfaith-encounter.org](http://www.interfaith-encounter.org)

**Description:** The Interfaith Encounter Association was created in the summer of 2001 by a group of concerned long-time interfaith activists who were sure that interfaith dialogue can bring much more blessings to the Middle East than it did at the time. We believe that by using interactive interfaith dialogue as the primary tool for cross-community encounters – true and sustainable coexistence can grow in a much more efficient way.

This was a new concept as the two fields had hardly any overlap in Israel. The interfaith dialogue field was very theologically oriented and the coexistence building field was very secularly and politically oriented. As results, both fields managed to involve only a limited number of people – a few hundreds of interested people in the case of the first field and a few thousands from the far left end of the Israeli political spectrum in the case of the second.

What we suggested is an approach in which when people from different communities come together they should not be having political discussions, as, at least here, these tend to be very superficial and very divisive and can cause even the enlargement of the gap for people who are exposed to the other for the first time. Instead we suggested that they should be studying together their respective religious traditions. In this way their encounter will be much more relaxed and deep and they will both find many commonalities between their traditions and will learn to accept their differences without being threatened by them. As the interaction is very intensive and very positive – they will go through a transformation that will replace the existing ignorance that leads to prejudices and fear, with deep understanding and mutual respect and trust.

Through the intensive implementation of this approach we wish to become a real social movement for change and contribute to the change of our society's dynamics so it can be re-crystallized into a culture of peace and harmony. We see our interfaith encounters as the seeds of a new crystallization capable of transforming society as a whole.

We look at our task as composed of three circles: the core circle, which we see as the basis for any other process in the Middle East, is the circle of Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze and Baha'is who live in Israel. The second circle is the Israeli-Palestinian circle of the Holy Land and the third circle is the larger circle of the Middle East.

Looking at our reality so far, it looks that the interfaith encounter approach was the right idea at the right time. In our six years of activity we managed to attract some 8,000 affiliates with some 4,000 participations in hundreds of activities in Israel. We organized 3 weekend retreats, each giving rise to an on-going encounter center, two desert seminars and some 500 study-encounter sessions – most of them in the framework of our 21 interfaith encounter centers across the country – from the pper Galilee to Eilat. Fourteen of these groups are open to everyone, four are women-only groups and three groups are for young adults.

In the Israeli-Palestinian circle we managed – even in the days of Intifada, starting as early as 2002 – to organize 19 interfaith retreats in cooperation with Palestinian organizations from Nablus, Ramalla, Hebron and Bethlehem and are now working to develop cooperative projects with four more organizations from across the Palestinian Authority – from Nablus and Qalqilia to Gaza and Khan Younis..

In the third circle we had three Middle East and North Africa conferences with additional people from Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Qatar and Tunisia. Regular reports from our activities are sent to our e-lists and posted in our web site: [www.interfaith-encounter.org/eventsrep.htm](http://www.interfaith-encounter.org/eventsrep.htm)

A nice illustration to the transformation participants go through is the story of a young Muslim woman from Egypt, very religious, who attended the first of our Middle Eastern conferences that took place in Berlin, Germany. It was the time when many huge demonstrations against Israel took place all over Europe and the Middle East and this young woman had never met Jews before and was quite afraid of meeting them, especially those from Israel. She spent most of the long journey from Egypt in asking her colleague not to put pressure on her to be too close with them (i.e. us!) or to expect her to shake their hands. To cut a long story short: she indeed met the first Jew in her life on Thursday evening but when we went to the Synagogue on Saturday morning she asked to join us and attended the whole prayer...

Looking to the future we now aim at significantly enhancing the process both in quantity and in quality. We hope very much to be able to raise the necessary funds to sustain and improve the existing interfaith encounter centers and for the launch of new ones. We also hope to be able to organize more retreats – both for the different communities in Israel and for Israelis and Palestinians and to be able to initiate further Middle Eastern projects.

Source: Provided by Yehuda Stolov Ph.D., Executive Director, Interfaith Encounter Association

Title: ***INTERPRO***

Address: Mirembe House  
Kibuye (Masaka Road)  
P.O.Box 9597  
Kampala  
Uganda

Contact: [interproug@yahoo.com](mailto:interproug@yahoo.com)

Description: INTERRELIGIOUS PROGRAMME (INTERPRO) was formed in 1998 by stakeholders (mainly youth) from Muslims, Anglicans, Catholics, Orthodox, Bahai, etc. INTERPRO is a National registered Non Governmental Organization both with the Non Governmental Organizations Board (NGO Board) under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Registrar of Companies since 2001.

INTERPRO aims at dialogue amongst believers of different religious denominations and is comprised of Catholics, Muslims, Anglicans, Orthodox, Bahai and has contacts with Hindus, etc. The

composition is reflected almost at all levels i.e. both at the executive committee and membership.

INTERPRO has organized a number of dialogue seminars, workshops and gatherings in several parts of Uganda including Kampala, Mityana, Fort Portal, Mbale, Mbarara, Arua, Nairobi, Kasese, etc.

INTERPRO produces a quarterly magazine, TOGETHER, through which stakeholders' air out their views on topical issues. TOGETHER is distributed in several areas of Uganda, East Africa and to individuals and organizations in other countries. The aim is to promote Unity in Diversity (UD). Several issues of TOGETHER magazines have been produced (copies can be accessed on request).

INTERPRO activities include but not limited to: interreligious dialogue activities, interreligious peace building activities, peace and conflict resolution efforts, environmental campaigns, HIV and AIDS advocacy, publication of TOGETHER magazine, support for vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, promotion of respect for divergent religious beliefs, universal tolerance for one another, and an interreligious resource center.

INTERPRO was very instrumental in setting up the Interreligious Council of Uganda (IRCU) an organization established by the highest religious leaders of the Anglican, Muslim, Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist and Orthodox. IRCU is affiliated to the New York based World Conference on Religion and peace (WCRP).

IRCU brings together the Mufti, Archbishop, the Cardinal, the elder, etc. Some INTERPRO members are on the GOVERNING BOARD of IRCU until now.

Source: Provided by Mugulumu Hamed, Finance and Programmes (INTERPRO)

Title: ***Beliefnet, Inc.***  
Address: 115 E 23rd ST  
Suite 400  
New York, NY 10010  
US

Phone: +1.2125331400

Web: <http://www.beliefnet.com/>

Description: Our mission is to help people like you find, and walk, a spiritual path that will bring comfort, hope, clarity, strength, and happiness. Whether you're exploring your own faith or other spiritual traditions, we provide you inspiring devotional tools, access to the best spiritual teachers and clergy in the world, thought-provoking commentary, and a supportive community. Beliefnet is the largest spiritual web site. We are independent and not affiliated with any spiritual organization or movement. Our only agenda is to help you meet your spiritual needs.

Source: <http://www.beliefnet.com/>

Title: ***Fellowship of Reconciliation***  
Address: 521 N. Broadway  
Nyack, New York 10960  
Contact: 845-358-4601  
for[[@forusa.org](mailto:for@forusa.org)]  
Web: <http://www.forusa.org/>  
Description: FOR's Vision: We envision a world of justice, peace, and freedom. It is a revolutionary vision of a beloved community where differences are respected, conflicts are addressed nonviolently, oppressive structures are dismantled, and where people live in harmony with the earth, nurtured by diverse spiritual traditions that foster compassion, solidarity, and reconciliation.  
FOR's Mission: FOR seeks to replace violence, war, racism, and economic injustice with nonviolence, peace, and justice. We are an interfaith organization committed to active nonviolence as a transforming way of life and as a means of radical change. We educate, train, build coalitions, and engage in nonviolent and compassionate actions locally, nationally, and globally.  
Since 1915, The Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) has carried on programs and educational projects concerned with domestic and international peace and justice, nonviolent alternatives to conflict, and the rights of conscience. A Nonviolent, Interfaith, tax exempt organization, The FOR promotes nonviolence and has members from many religious and ethnic traditions. It is a part of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), which has affiliates in over 40 countries.  
Source: <http://www.forusa.org/>

Title: ***Global PeaceWorks***  
Address: PO Box 316  
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598  
USA  
Contact: [globalteam@globalpeaceworks.org](mailto:globalteam@globalpeaceworks.org)  
Web: <http://www.globalpeaceworks.org/>  
Description: Our Vision: To bring people of diverse spiritual traditions together for cooperative, charitable service projects. Our Mission: We create opportunities for people of diverse faiths and spiritual traditions to live together, perform charitable service and explore spirituality. Living as an international, interfaith family, we perform service, focus on interfaith dialogue and visit sacred sites. We support existing interfaith dialogue and interfaith conferences with a real-world expression of peace-building through action. Our ten day service-projects complement the good work of many wonderful organizations including the United Religions Initiative in

which we are a Cooperation Circle. Our Principles: We have three core principles, which guide our work. Humanity is One Family. People are essentially spiritual beings. Selfless Service fosters peace. We also promote Principles of Peaceful Leadership.

Our Strategy: Our initial focus is India, which has a culture rich in spiritual tradition. In Dec 2003 and Dec 2004 - Jan 2005 we will manage projects in New Delhi leading to the URI Global Assembly in Seoul, Korea (2005). After the URI Global Assembly, we will expand to serve additional countries in South Asia. We invite participation of faith groups and interfaith organizations; people interested in discovering the spiritual traditions of Asia; people interested in peace-making; and people looking for an international adventure.

Source: <http://www.globalpeaceworks.org/>

Title: ***The Harmony Institute***

Address: PO Box 242  
Jonesville, VT 05466

Phone: (802) 434-4939

Contact: [info@theharmonyinstitute.org](mailto:info@theharmonyinstitute.org)

Description: The Harmony Institute finds that the study of the common teachings results in opportunities for Peace, both inner and outer peace.

All the religions and modern science agree, that we can follow certain instructions and follow a path towards attaining inner peace. Compassion for other beings, prayer and meditation, self-hypnosis, inner searching, and study, are examples of instructions that all the disciplines agree are helpful in pursuing inner peace. The Harmony Institute's founder, Gary Beckwith, is a Certified Hypnotherapist and a student of the power of the human mind.

One of the greatest effects of studying the common teachings of the world's religions is the realization that they are all connected and compatible with each other. While religion has been used as an excuse to kill and cause wars for centuries, the world will some day (hopefully soon) realize that religion can also be used to connect, heal, and realize our common bonds with all cultures of the earth.

The Harmony Institute explores and promotes the common core teachings of all the religions. The Harmony Institute seeks to attain these goals by conducting objective research, publishing books and documents, and establishing educational programs that focus on the similarities and common bonds between the world's religions.

We believe the world would be a more peaceful place if more people realized how much the religions agree and share.

In an effort to make these concepts accessible to as many as people as possible, the information and programs produced by the Harmony



Institute are targeted at the general public. Our goal is to make this information as objective, logical, and easy-to-understand as possible.

The Harmony Institute has an ongoing and ever-changing list of programs and projects to support these goals.

Source: <http://www.theharmonyinstitute.org/>

Title: ***Interfaith Action***

Address: Star House  
104 Grafton Road  
London NW5 4BA  
United Kingdom

Phone: 020 7482 40 20

Email: [info@interact-uk.org.uk](mailto:info@interact-uk.org.uk)

Description: Our aim is to build understanding and respect between people of all faiths. We work towards a cohesive society where all faiths are not only tolerated but where individuals are respected and diversity is valued and celebrated.

We achieve this through facilitating dialogue, joint action and civic participation, as well as raising awareness and understanding. In turn enabling people of all faith communities to engage with each other and the wider community through projects encouraging shared and responsible citizenship benefiting all. Most of our projects are tailored for young people (under 25 year olds) from all faith and cultural backgrounds.

Inter-Act is based in the "interfaith hub", alongside the Three Faiths Forum (Youth Division), Faith Matters and Rene Cassin. It is a space in which young people can come and be at the heart of London's interfaith scene.

Source: <http://www.interact-uk.org.uk/index.htm>

Title: ***Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa***

Address: Coordinating Office  
Sheikh Saliou Mbacké, Consultant / Coordinator  
C/O LWF/DWS Gitanga Road Lavington  
P.O. Box 40870, 00100  
GPO - Nairobi, Kenya

Phone: (254) 20 577777, (254) 20 578181

Contact: [info@africa-faithforpeace.org](mailto:info@africa-faithforpeace.org)

Web: <http://www.africa-faithforpeace.org/>

Description: Working for Inter-Religious Understanding, through a continuous process of genuine inter-faith encounter, discussion, and consultation, in order to promote respect for each other's religious traditions, and refrain from denigrating them.

These commitments are based upon the religious traditions from which we come. They are solemn commitments to help us implement the Johannesburg Plan of Action. We intend to fulfill them. We pray that our hearts, our minds, and our bodies will be strengthened for this task, and that our work will be blessed with success. We pray that those who follow us, our children and our communities, will learn and benefit from these humble efforts of ours to eliminate the culture of violence, hatred and prejudice from our societies and to embrace the gift of peace for all in our continent.

Source: <http://www.africa-faithforpeace.org/>

Title: ***Interfaith Voices for Peace & Justice***

Address: PO Box 23346  
Santa Barbara CA 93121  
USA

Web: <http://interspirit.net/ifv.cfm>

Description: Interfaith Voices for Peace & Justice is an interfaith network system oriented towards political issues, that brings together 1300+ members and 750+ organizations. The Interfaith Voices directory of organizations is divided into 20 areas of concern, and we are working to provide ways that organizations working in these areas can communicate with one another, and where appropriate, support a common or shared agenda. Purpose: IFV is a communications network for interfaith-based activist groups and individuals. We believe that enhanced communications on intercultural issues will lead to an improved understanding and the emergence of an informed and compassionate society.

Source: <http://interspirit.net/group.cfm?groupid>

Title: ***Interfaith Center of New York***

Address: The Interfaith Center of New York (we moved!)  
475 Riverside Drive  
New York, NY 10115

Phone: 212.870.3510

Fax: 212.870.3499

Web: <http://www.interfaithcenter.org/>

Description: The Interfaith Center of New York is a secular non-profit educational organization. Our goal is to create understanding and respect among the different religious groups of New York City as well as to encourage members of all faiths to get involved in civic participation. We seek to help solving social issues in the fields of education, the legal system, social work, the arts and culture.

Our programs and events aim at connecting religious communities with one another. We also provide grass root religious leaders with the opportunity to learn more about civic

institutions throughout the city and to cooperate with key public figures. At the same time secular representatives get the chance to better understand diverse religious backgrounds.

Source: <http://www.interfaithcenter.org/about.html>

Title: ***Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility***

Address: Room 1842  
475 Riverside Drive  
New York, NY 10115  
USA

Phone: 212-870-2295

Contact: [info@iccr.org](mailto:info@iccr.org)

Web: <http://www.iccr.org>

Description: For thirty-five years the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) has been a leader of the corporate social responsibility movement. ICCR's membership is an association of 275 faith-based institutional investors, including national denominations, religious communities, pension funds, foundations, hospital corporations, economic development funds, asset management companies, colleges, and unions. ICCR and its members press companies to be socially and environmentally responsible. Each year ICCR-member religious institutional investors sponsor over 200 shareholder resolutions on major social and environmental issues.

Working Together for Peace, Economic Justice and Stewardship of the Earth, ICCR is a thirty-five-year-old international coalition of 275 faith-based institutional investors including denominations, religious communities, pension funds, healthcare corporations, foundations, asset management companies, colleges, and dioceses. As responsible stewards, they merge social values with investment decisions, believing they must achieve more than an acceptable financial return. ICCR members utilize religious investments and other resources to change unjust or harmful corporate policies, working for peace, economic justice and stewardship of the Earth.

ICCR members are serious, long-term investors for whom financial performance of their socially-screened portfolios is crucial to their investment strategy. They use the power of persuasion backed by economic pressure from consumers and investors to hold corporations accountable. They sponsor shareholder resolutions; meet with management; screen their investments; conduct public hearings; publish special reports; and sponsor letter-writing campaigns.

Source: <http://www.iccr.org>

Title: ***International Association for Religious Freedom***

Address: 2 Market Street

Oxford OX1 3ET  
United Kingdom

Contact: +44 (0)1865 202-744, fax: +44 (0)1865 202-746  
hq@iarf.net

Web: <http://www.iarf.net>

Description: The International Association for Religious Freedom is a registered charity based in the United Kingdom which has the aim of working for freedom of religion and belief at a global level.

Encouraging interfaith dialogue and tolerance is part of this agenda, and we are proud of a 100-year-plus history in this work. We have over 90 affiliated member groups in approximately 25 countries, from a wide range of faith traditions including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Shintoism and Sikhism, among others.

With member organisations, regional co-ordinators, and national chapters around the world, the International Association for Religious Freedom is well placed to obtain local perspectives on religious freedom concerns and issues.

The purpose of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) is to work for freedom of religion and belief because it is a precious human right that potentially enables the best within our religious lives, or our search for truth or enlightenment, to flourish. It requires work on three aspects, any of which may constitute the core objective for the IARF membership in a country or region:

- Freedom from oppressive interference or discrimination by the state, government or society's institutions on the grounds of religion or belief;
- Mutual understanding, respect and the promotion of harmony, or at least "tolerance", between communities or individuals of different religions or beliefs;
- An essential accountability by religious communities to ensure that their own practices uphold the fundamental dignity and human rights of their members and others.

Thus, IARF works with and for:

- Groups from different religious traditions or beliefs (normally those which share its values);
- Communities suffering from religious persecution or discrimination.

Source: <http://www.iarf.net>

Title: ***International Committee for the Peace Council***

Address: 1112 Grant Street  
Madison, Wisconsin 53711  
USA

Contact: [office@peacecouncil.org](mailto:office@peacecouncil.org)

Web: <http://www.peacecouncil.org/>

Description: The Peace Council is a diverse group of religious and spiritual individuals who are internationally known and respected and who have decided to come together, as the Dalai Lama wrote in a recent letter, "to understand one another and work together so that those of us who profess belief in our respective faiths can work for the common cause of humanity." He added, "I believe that such a joint effort can set the right example for the rest of the world."

#### Mission

The mission of the Peace Council is to demonstrate that peace is possible, and that effective interreligious collaboration to make peace also is possible.

In a world where religion too often is used to justify division, hatred, and violence -- and very seldom used to relieve these problems -- the Peace Councilors offer an alternative: the example of religious leaders working effectively together to relieve suffering and make the world whole.

#### The Inaugural Meeting

The Peace Councilors met for the first time in November, 1995. They agreed on a statement of purpose and commitment. From many faiths, they had a common concern with their responsibilities face-to-face with suffering. They identified seven interdependent threats to peace:

- \* religious intolerance;
- \* war, violence, and the arms trade;
- \* environmental degradation;
- \* economic injustice;
- \* the population "explosion;"
- \* patriarchy (cultures of domination, hierarchy, and control);
- \* and oppressive globalization.

Peace Council programs are intended to relieve these causes of suffering and, by their examples, to help people and communities grow in the ways of peace.

The Peace Council supports local peacemakers in regions of special need. It gives practical assistance to local peace efforts and to "communities of peace."

The Peace Council also works with the United Nations, governments, and other non-governmental organizations.

#### Organization: How the Peace Council Works

The Peace Councilors meet for a week each year, usually in the fall and usually at the invitation of a local peace maker. They prefer to meet in a place where the meeting itself may contribute to a peace process or may help to relieve suffering.

The Peace Councilors provide overall guidance and direction, and give their personal support and participation to specific programs.

A volunteer board of trustees, called the International Committee for the Peace Council, administers the programs of the Peace Council. There is a full-time staff of three persons.

The International Committee for the Peace Council is recognized by the United States Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt charity (a 501(c)(3) organization).

Source: <http://www.peacecouncil.org/>

Title: ***International Interfaith Centre (IIC)***

Address: PO Box 750  
Oxford  
OX3 3BR  
UK

Website: <http://www.interfaith-centre.org/>

Description: Over the years the International Interfaith Centre (IIC) has had many achievements, mainly in its ability to link people from all parts of the world, to share their hopes, difficulties and successes. A series of conferences with subjects of common interest have built both friendship and inspiration as each portrays the situations faced by individuals and organisations in their own country.

In addition, IIC has built up an annual or biannual gathering connecting the different International Interreligious Organisations IION . In November 2007 representatives from ten organisations will meet near Oxford for a three day gathering. Among the topics for discussion are interfaith work at the UN , the next Parliament of the World's Religions , new interfaith questions initiative, and work with young people.

The International Interfaith Centre promotes interreligious understanding and co-operation between different faith communities and organisations of religious or spiritual conviction.

In support of this aim, IIC will:

1. facilitate communication between international interfaith organisations including an annual meeting of the International Interfaith Organisation Network.
2. develop a Study Centre for high quality research and education on interreligious issues.
3. organise projects and conferences which promote religious conflict resolution and dialogue.

Source: <http://www.interfaith-centre.org/>

Title: ***Interreligious Engagement Project***

Address: Jim Kenney, Executive Director  
980 Verda Lane, Lake Forest, IL 60045 USA

Phone: 847-234-8047 • Fax: 847-234-0752 •

Web: <http://www.iep21.org/>

Description: The IEP21 Forum is a web log (yes, a blog) designed to provide the latest news, commentary, and event information from the Interreligious Engagement Project. In addition, the Forum is home to the ongoing Global Dialogue of Civilizations: “Muslim Cultures and Western Cultures in Quest for Justice and Peace”. The Dialogue of Civilizations project is designed to engage the global Muslim community and the West in deeper encounter and dialogue in order to promote greater understanding, mutual respect, and cooperative common action. The project will be a multi-year undertaking, culminating in a Conference convened in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in the next few years. The Dialogue Conference will be preceded by an continuing online dialogue to refine the themes, format, working sections, agenda, and draft plan for the event. The web-based consultations will also develop a series of recommended projects that will be implemented before and after the Kuala Lumpur gathering. These joint action efforts will address critical issues of peace, justice, and ecological sustainability. (To enter the Dialogue section of the Forum, click on “Dialogue” under “Categories”.)

Source: <http://www.iep21.org/forum/about/>

Title: ***Institute of Interfaith Dialogue***

Address: 5905 Winsome Ln. #200  
Houston, TX 77057

Contact: 713 974 4443

Fax: 713 974 4445

Description: The Institute of Interfaith Dialog (IID) grew out of the need to address the question, "How can citizens of the world live in peace and harmony?" From this question a conversation took root and began to grow. The founding members of the IID knew from personal experience that a discussion on religion and spirituality did not have to digress into confusion, fighting, and anarchy. On the contrary the founding members understood that peace could be achieved by sharing different perspectives by listening to each other from the space of love, respect, tolerance, mercy, and compassion.

Mission of the IID: The Institute of Interfaith Dialog is a non-profit organization whose primary goal is to help bring together the communities in order to promote compassion, cooperation, partnership and community service through interfaith dialog and conversation. The IID is dedicated to encouraging the study of the global communities' spiritual traditions from the vantage point of respect, accuracy, and appreciation.

Vision of IID: In its efforts to promote fully expressed dialog within the global community and to maintain its objectivity, the IID does not accept favors nor does it promote any political or government agency be it foreign or domestic. The IID has made a commitment to maintain its

stance for compassion and respect with regard to free expression of spirituality throughout communities.

Aims of the IID: The IID has taken a stand that peace on the planet can be achieved within the foreseeable future. The vision of the Institute of Interfaith Dialog is to help unite communities in order that the spirituality of all individuals be heard in a space that is free of dogmatism, criticism, oppression, and fear.

Education and IID: An intrinsic aspect of the IID is to promote the study of world religions and spiritual faiths in order to gain wisdom and knowledge so that people will have a renewed sense of gratitude, and respect for the spiritual beliefs they hold closest to their hearts. By being in constant communication with other people who have different traditions from their own, we each have the opportunity to refine and appreciate our own beliefs and traditions.

Source: <http://www.interfaithdialog.org/>

Title: ***Movement for a Beloved Community***

Address: P.O Box 620036  
San Diego, CA 92162-0036

Phone: (619) 232-3317

Email: [rflyer@earthlink.net](mailto:rflyer@earthlink.net)

Web: <http://home.earthlink.net/~rflyer/About.html>

Description: The mission of MOVEMENT FOR BELOVED COMMUNITY is to promote the awakening of individuals, families, neighborhoods, communities, villages, regions, and the world as a whole. The approach is to encourage the growth of spiritually-based and comprehensive local community building efforts around the world--- linked together in a global network.

Source: <http://home.earthlink.net/~rflyer/About.html>

Title: ***North American Interfaith Network***

Address: 1426 9th Street NW, Second Floor  
Washington, DC 20001-3330  
USA

Contact: 202-234-6300

Web: <http://www.nain.org>

Description: NAIN's programs seek to build communication and mutual understanding among diverse religious groups throughout North America. Through its annual conference, newsletter, web site, member organizations, Board and supportive participants, NAIN offers networking opportunities to numerous interfaith organizations. NAIN affirms humanity's diverse and historic spiritual resources, bringing these to bear on contemporary global, national, regional and local issues.



Source: <http://www.nain.org>

Title: ***Sisters of Embracement***

Address: N/A

Email: [srjuliemarie3@sistersofembracement.org](mailto:srjuliemarie3@sistersofembracement.org)

Web: <http://www.sistersofembracement.org/>

Description: We are the Sisters of Embracement, women dedicated to living our respective faiths deeply and devotedly being a living example of love, peace, and harmony to all the world. Our Sisters are dedicated to love, honor and respect all life and all people -- regardless of their religious or non-religious practices.

Our mission is to bring together in harmony those faiths that have a belief in An All-Enlightened Being/God or Truth. To show by our love and actions that This Being/God is The Motivating Force of our lives, our love, and our altruism. Living deeply our individual faiths we will show each other and the world that our various faiths are truly One Great Wisdom coming from One Great God Who is worshipped under Many Names: Tanka Shila Wanken Tanken, Grandfather Great Spirit, Brahman, Siva, Ganesh, Allah, Buddha, Yaweh, Abba, etc.

We love and respect all those who choose to practice a faith with no All-Enlightened Being/God, or who choose to believe in nothing. We hope that by our faith, our love, our lives, and our stories we will inspire those who have no faith in Buddha, Brahman, Ganesh, Allah, Yaweh, Tanka Shila Wanken Tanken, Abba, or Truth, to explore one of these True Paths to The Enlightened One and see what love and miracles can fill their lives and hearts. We sisters love you all, please come and feel The Good Energy of The Enlightened One, Tanka Shila Wankan Tanken, Buddha, Alla, Brahman, Truth, Yaweh, Grandfather Great Spirit, Gichi Manitu and many other Sides of Our Infinite God.

Source: <http://www.sistersofembracement.org/>

Title: ***Schools of Forgiveness and Reconciliation, ESPERE***

Address: Father Leonel Narváez Gómez, Director  
Calle 40 No. 78A-14, Bogota, Colombia

Phone: (011-57-1)-429-9550 & 429-6511

Contact: [leonel@fundacionparalareconciliacion.org](mailto:leonel@fundacionparalareconciliacion.org)

Web: [www.fundacionparalareconciliacion.org](http://www.fundacionparalareconciliacion.org)

Description: The project known as "Schools of Forgiveness and Reconciliation" (Escuelas de Perdon y Reconciliation, ESPERE) came into being under the auspices of the "Convivencia ciudadand".

Many thousands of Colombians who have suffered the cruelty of violence are nurturing anger, hatred, resentment and the desire for revenge. Victims, in failing to deal with their anger and hatred in a positive way, as shown by recent statistics in the case of Bogota, are at a

high risk of becoming perpetrators of violence in their turn. Anger does undoubtedly build up over time and may be both individual and collective; worse still, it may lead to sickness and paralysis in the inner working of both individuals and societies.

Since 2002, Schools of Forgiveness and Reconciliation (ESPERE) have been set up in 59 of the most violent and conflict-ridden neighborhoods in Bogota, Colombia.

The cornerstone of the project is the training of aniraadores, or facilitators. It is they who form the backbone of the initiative. A facilitator will have come from a grassroots organization of a social, political, religious or cultural nature, or will wish to play a part in overcoming the difficulties which living together in a society generates within groups and individuals.

In the years 2002 and 2003, 400 neighborhood facilitators were given training in the techniques of forgiveness and reconciliation. As soon as their training was complete they went on to set up local schools of forgiveness and reconciliation in their own neighborhoods. The schools are made up of 10 to 15 people who, after receiving help in self-motivation from the facilitator, have decided to make a start on the road to forgiveness and reconciliation.

Source: [http://oldsite.edmundclt.org/unplaced\\_material/espere\\_schools.htm](http://oldsite.edmundclt.org/unplaced_material/espere_schools.htm)

Title: ***Tanenbaum Center for Religious Understanding***

Address: 254 W. 31st Street

7th Floor

New York, NY 10001

Contact: (212) 967-7707 fax: (212) 967-9001

Web: <http://www.tanenbaum.org>

Description: The Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding provides practical programs to prevent the growing problem of verbal and physical conflict based on religion. We are a non-sectarian not-for-profit that works in schools, workplaces and in areas of armed conflict.

Education: Children don't begin life filled with fear, hatred and negative stereotypes, but attitudes form early. We train educators to prepare students to thrive in a multicultural, multi-religious society by providing training and cutting-edge multicultural curricula.

Workplace: Religion in the workplace can be tricky. That's why we work with corporations and institutions to create religiously inclusive policies and practices. We train service providers in healthcare and other settings to work with religiously diverse communities.

Conflict resolution: Sick of headlines about religion fueling wars? We identify, train and promote religious peacemakers from far and near -- so that they are even more effective in areas of armed conflict.

Special programs: Religion has been -- and still is -- used to

justify bigotry and hate. Tanenbaum is known for its conferences and publications on the religious roots of prejudice.

Source: <http://www.tanenbaum.org>

**Title:** *The Temple of Understanding*

**Address:** 211 East 43rd Street, Suite 1600  
New York, NY 10017

**Contact:** 212-573-9224  
Fax: 212-573-9225

**Email:** [info@templeofunderstanding.org](mailto:info@templeofunderstanding.org)

**Web:** <http://www.templeofunderstanding.org/>

**Description:** The mission of the Temple of Understanding (TOU) is to achieve peaceful coexistence among individuals, communities, and societies through interfaith education. Our programs emphasize experiential knowledge and dialogue as a means of connecting people of all ages across a spectrum of religious traditions. Our goals are to

- foster appreciation of religious and cultural diversity
- expand public discourse on religion and spirituality
- educate for global citizenship
- create a more just and peaceful world

Founded in 1960, the Temple of Understanding is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit and a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Source: <http://www.templeofunderstanding.org/>

**Title:** *Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace*

**Address:** 556 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10036

**Contact:** (212) 764-1300 Fax (212) 840-8602

**Web:** <http://www.tripartiteinterfaithforum.org>

**Description:** The Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace[1], held at the UN headquarters in New York on 22 June 2005, recommended, inter alia, the creation of an open-ended consultative group composed of representatives of UN Member States, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations. The Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace (TFICP) was founded on the basis of this recommendation. The mission, goal, functions, guiding principles and other features of the Tripartite Forum are set out in its Terms of Reference.

The Forum is a partnership of governments, UN agencies and civil society organizations that sets the Forum into motion. The uniqueness of the Forum lies in its pioneering tripartite cooperation. The partnership, while working outside the UN mantle, is supportive of UN programs relating to peaceful co-existence.

Participation in the Forum is open-ended and, for this purpose, prospective partners are invited to join the tripartite partnership, in keeping with the principles of inclusiveness and universality. The Forum's mission statement defines the secular nature of the partnership, which leaves discussion of theological issues to other forums of religious experts.

The activities of the Forum are mutually reinforcing and inclusive of related initiatives and programs of the United Nations and governments, inter-governmental organizations and other organizations, designed to foster mutual respect, tolerance and friendship between peoples, cultures and religions. The focus of the Forum's activities will be on practical measures to create a value added to the abundant rhetoric on interfaith dialogue and cooperation for peace. Participation in the activities of the Forum is voluntary on the part of the Tripartite Partners and does not entail prior financial commitments. There will be a periodic review of the Terms of Reference of the Forum by the Tripartite Partners to enhance the Forum's performance.

Source: <http://www.tripartiteinterfaithforum.org/aboutus.htm>

Title: ***The Unification Theological Seminary***

Address: 30 Seminary Drive  
Barrytown, NY 12571

Web: <http://www.uts.edu/>

Description: The Unification Theological Seminary carries out instruction, research and publication in an interfaith setting for ministries that foster faith and character development, godly families, healthy and growing churches, and communities of peace and justice beyond race, nation and religion. Its curriculum is grounded in scripture, God's historical and contemporary providence, the discipline of theological reflection, and field experience. Located in Barrytown, New York and with an Extension Center in midtown Manhattan, the seminary works with all churches and seminaries for the practical implementation of these ministries.

The Seminary serves its founding church, by providing theological education that prepares students for leadership in the Unification Church and for the practice of many types of ministry, such as church leadership, campus ministry, evangelism, religious education and missionary work; by preparing students for ecumenical and inter-religious work in the spirit of Unificationism; by promoting the Unificationist worldview as an alternative to atheistic and materialistic ideologies; by providing philosophical and theological training that will benefit students entering the social services, journalism and other non-clerical occupations; by providing preparation for students who may pursue doctoral studies in theology, philosophy and related fields at other graduate schools; and by operating a seminary with a curriculum of spiritual and academic quality

that fosters the spiritual formation of its students and helps create a community as an expression of Unification Thought and life.

Source: <http://www.uts.edu/index.php>

Title: ***UNIITE***  
Address: Tri-Cap Building #4  
700 W St. Germain  
St. Cloud, MN 56301  
Phone: 320-291-7124  
Email: [admin@uniite.org](mailto:admin@uniite.org)  
Web: <http://www.uniite.org/>  
Description: We are a small group of Central Minnesota people connected to the larger surrounding communities through our various faith communities, schools, workplaces and other parts of our daily lives.  
We are teachers, homemakers, factory workers, nurses, doctors, office workers, students, business owners, musicians, artists, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters.  
We are people from all walks of life working and playing together to help ourselves and others learn to overcome the barriers of fear and misunderstanding about our differences.  
We are about creating vibrant, interactive and welcoming relationships. We are Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Pagan, Baha'i, Atheist, Mormon, Unitarian Universalist, and all other expressions of the Sacred. We are here to befriend and help each other in whatever ways we can.  
Vision Statement: Religious and cultural diversity is recognized, respected and celebrated in the greater St. Cloud area  
Mission Statement: To foster mutual respect and understanding among people of diverse spiritual paths and cultures in the greater St. Cloud area through social and educational opportunities

Source: <http://www.uniite.org/current.html>

Title: ***World Interfaith Congress***  
Address: PO Box 23346  
Santa Barbara CA 93121  
USA  
Web: <http://interspirit.net/ifv.cfm>  
Description: The World Interfaith Congress is an online network system that brings together representatives from leading interfaith organizations from all over the world. The primary objective is to provide a means of communication that can support the emergence of consensus and shared understanding on critical issues confronting the world.

Purpose: In an age of dissolving cultural and geographic boundaries, we are organizing the World Interfaith Congress as a "meeting place of religions", where representatives from faith-based organizations from all over the world can come together and explore the implications of their faith in a broad social context.

WIC is a multi-level network, intended to provide support for busy professionals, who are interested in developing contacts with other professionals in related fields. We are defining the network in a series of precise categories, in ways that allow us to build a wide variety of special-purpose sub-networks.

WIC is intended as an expression of a comprehensive and informed interfaith philosophy, that fully embraces diversity, and acknowledges and respects the great variety of approaches to faith, yet provides ways to establish any underlying common ground that may exist.

WIC is a tool for activists -- workers in faith-based areas who want to get something done. We provide tools to link you with others in your field, and open the door to a wide variety of special-purpose conversations. Through WIC, you can send newsletters and action alerts to others in your field, as well as expose your work and point of view to the larger WIC community. You have an opportunity to place your most important documents online, and can organize them in the form of a "Project" that can appear as an online "book", linked through a table of contents you define. You can edit and update and delete any files you put online to the WIC community.

If you are a faith-based activist or religious leader, or a spiritual philosopher or scholar with something to say, if you want to be part of an evolving and sophisticated global community, that brings together the strongest and most influential voices in the global interfaith conversation, you belong on the WIC network.

Source: <http://interspirit.net/group.cfm?groupid>

Title: ***World Peace Prayer Society***

Address: The World Peace Sanctuary  
26 Benton Road  
Wassaic, NY 12592

Web: <http://worldpeace.org/>

Description: The World Peace Prayer Society is a nonprofit, non-sectarian, member-supported organization dedicated to spreading the message and prayer May Peace Prevail on Earth all over the world. It was founded in Japan by Masahisa Goi in 1955, and in 1988 the world headquarters moved to New York. In 1990 the Society was accepted as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in affiliation with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations.

The Society has offices in Tokyo, Munich, Santiago and San Francisco, as well as headquarters at the beautiful World Peace Sanctuary in Wassaic, New York, home of the Annual World Peace Festival. Volunteer Peace Representatives in many countries organize activities such as Peace Pole plantings and World Peace Prayer Ceremonies.

People of all backgrounds are welcome to join the World Peace Prayer Society. Membership is free; all that is asked is to take the prayer May Peace Prevail on Earth into your heart and make it part of your life.

Source: <http://worldpeace.org/wpps.html>

Title: ***World Pilgrims***

Address: 69 East Side Ave, SE  
Atlanta, GA 30316

Phone: 404.622.3399

Email: [worldpilgrims@bellsouth.net](mailto:worldpilgrims@bellsouth.net)

Web: <http://faithallianceofmetroatlanta.org/>

Description: The mission of World Pilgrims continues after the pilgrims return. They return home better prepared to live together in our religiously diverse world, and committed to work together for greater cooperation, justice, goodness and peace. After returning home from the first pilgrimage in 2002, an active alumni network was created whose vision statement became: people of different faiths becoming closer friends and widening the circle. They also created a mission statement that “creates environments and opportunities for trust and friendships to develop through dialogue, activities and travel with the primary focus of building one-on-one relationships with persons of other faiths.”

After 5 more pilgrimages have taken place, groups are constantly helping one another with community presentations at mosques, synagogues, or churches classes, joint invocations before agencies, companies, schools, and anywhere where the audience wants to see and understand how diverse faith people could possibly be friends who work together.

Source: <http://faithallianceofmetroatlanta.org/>

Title: ***World Youth Peace Summit***

Address: World Youth Peace – Headquarters  
Empire State Building  
350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 5403  
New York, NY 10118

Contact: (01) 212-967-2891

Fax: (01) 212-967-2898

Web: <http://www.wyps.org/index.php>



**Description:** Peace is the desire of everybody, but it takes a special kind of person to actively seek it. These people are leaders. The World Youth Peace Summit brings together dynamic young leaders who share the dream of peace. We do this by organizing Youth Peace Conferences and facilitating a worldwide network that links active young people with the support they need. These Youth Leaders represent the best of all sectors, encompassing government, business and independent organizations. The World Youth Peace Summit combines the strengths of these diverse leaders for a common goal.

The World Youth Peace Summit is the first multi-sectoral youth platform for peace, bringing together young leaders from government, business, entertainment, education, law, medicine, science, religion, the arts, technology, sports, media, agriculture, non-governmental organizations and youth organizations. The Summit will harness the strengths of these diverse leaders for a common goal. The delegates will come together to create the following:

- A Youth Action Plan for World Peace and Security (YAP-WPS);
- A permanent collaborative structure to work for peace;
- A worldwide network that links active youth leaders and provides the recognition and support they need

**Source:** <http://www.wyps.org/aboutus.php>

## **Muslim**

**Title:** *Centre for Contemporary Islamic Studies*

**Address:** 32 Onan Road  
The Galaxy  
Singapore, 424484

**Contact:** 06-440-7723

**Web:** <http://www.ccis.org.sg>

**Description:** C.C.I.S. is conceived and presented as an autonomous body whose primary objectives are: to conduct research, organize seminars, lectures, conferences and meetings on contemporary Islamic issues and matters concerning the Muslim community; to publish, sell and distribute printed and multi-media materials on contemporary matters; to organize, participate and assist in educational activities. The Centre will also seek to promote interfaith dialogue between scholars of different religious persuasions. The objective is to develop a better understanding of Muslims and of their concerns among other religious groups and secular scholars.

**Source:** Provided by Imran Price, Deputy Director General for CCIS.



Title: ***International Islamic Council for Daw'a and Relief***  
Address: P.O. Box 34128  
Jeddah 21468  
Saudi Arabia  
Contact: alrifaie@dialogueonline.org  
Web: <http://www.dialogueonline.org>  
Description: The goal of the Council is to guide Islamic work and its activities, organizing the efforts of the Islamic Omah (nation) to be in service of the Islamic issues, and developing Islamic action to be on the level of a mission of the Islamic civilization which calls on us to assure unity of the human family, and to achieve acquaintance among people; and activating the divine values to achieve human dignity, security and justice in the earth according to the will of Almighty Allah.  
Dialogue among civilizations has become an international phenomenon and a pressing requirement. For that, International Islamic Council for Daw'a and Relief decided to establish the International Islamic Forum for Dialogue (IIFD) to assume tasks of the dialogue and to ingrain its conceptions.  
Source: <http://www.dialogueonline.org>

Title: ***The World Council of Muslims for Interfaith Relations***  
Address: P. O. Box 142  
Macomb, IL  
61455, USA  
Web: <http://www.wcmir.org>  
Description: The council is an organization made up of a group of Muslims from various countries from various backgrounds, academic, professional and social activists. The organization's objectives are to explain Islam and Muslim's stance to other communities regarding issues and to understand other communities' stance regarding these issues, thereby harnessing better understanding of each other, erasing misconceptions and diffusing tensions, if any. The Council engages in interfaith and intercommunal dialogues and activities to explain Islam's stance on issues evolving and recurring and to understand other religion's responses to these issues; works within the Muslim communities towards better understanding of other religions and communities; works and organizes programs with local and international bodies towards world peace.  
Source: Provided by Prof. Kamar Oniah, a member of the council.

Title: ***Affinity Intercultural Foundation***  
Address: PO BOX 496  
Auburn, NSW 2144  
Australia

Phone: (02) 9702 0789  
Contact: info@affinity.org.au  
Web: http://www.affinity.org.au  
Description: The goals of the Foundation are to create and sustain enduring affinity and relationships with people through inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue and understanding; to add value to the lives of individuals by becoming a catalyst in their learning to lead harmonious and balanced lives; to gain true personal leadership and to apply universal principles in fulfilling their needs of the mind and the heart. In a short space of time since its inception in 2001, the Foundation has embarked on a number of significant projects to foster dialogue between Muslims and various Christian groups (Catholic, Anglican and Protestant) to begin with. The Foundation plans to extend the dialogue initiative to people and groups from other religions and is prepared to accept any sincere invitation for dialogue.

Source: http://www.affinity.org.au

Title: ***The Muslim Council of Britain***

Contact: mary@islamic-foundation.org.uk  
(Ms. Mary Barber, Secretary)

Web: http://www.mcb.org.uk

Description: The MCB is an umbrella organization dedicated to the common good, to the betterment of the community and country. It was inaugurated - after several years of wide-ranging consultation and careful planning - on November 23 1997 at the Brent Town Hall in Wembley by representatives of more than 250 Muslim organizations from all parts of Britain including Northern Ireland. Interfaith Relations Committees in building networks and forging links with key organizations in the field, produce a best practices guide to interfaith work in the UK, encourage interfaith work amongst the MCB affiliates, promote an environment where there is harmony, tolerance and respect for members of all faiths, and increase awareness and understanding of Islam and Islamic interaction with other faiths.

Source: http://www.mcb.org.uk

Title: ***Islamic Religious Council of Singapore***

Address: Secretary MUIS  
Islamic Center of Singapore  
1, Lorong 6 Toa Payoh  
Singapore

319376

Phone: 06-256-8188

Contact: info@muis.gov.sg

Web: http://www.muis.gov.sg

**Description:** Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (Islamic Religious Council of Singapore) broadens and deepen the Singaporean Muslim Community's understanding and practice of Islam, while enhancing the well being of the nation. In the MUIS 3-Year Plan (M3YP), MUIS had adopted “being Inclusive and Consultative” as two of its three core principles. In manifesting those values, MUIS held a series of engagements, discussions, talks and visits throughout 2005 with the objective of strengthening the bonds with both Muslim and non-Muslim organizations and communities. The Harmony Centre and MUIS Academy will be organizing an interfaith training programme on the theme “Valuing Diversity Across Communities.” (26 & 27 July 2007)

**Source:** <http://www.muis.gov.sg>

**Title:** *Individual Participation*

**Address:** Uganda

**Description:** Sheikh Hamid Amir Byamugenzi writes: The Subject of Inter-religious engagement is so paramount in today's world than ever before. People look up to religion as a source of an alternative solution to their various challenges all through. African continent is plunged into civil, military and all types of wars claiming many lives of children, pregnant women, and innocent people among others. The Genocide in Rwanda of 1994, the civil wars and violence in Southern Sudan, Northern Uganda, Somalia, Angola, Liberia, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Algeria, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Niger Delta (Nigeria), Chad among others perplex the minds of many a people.

It is on the basis of such background that, major religious representatives of the continent notably, African Traditional religion, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism Jewish and Bahai decided to form an Interfaith Network to join existing initiatives and work for peace among other concerns on the continent of Africa and beyond.

Under the inter-faith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA), Uganda Chapter, I have been able to share close discussions with non-Muslims. Particularly, the Catholics, Anglicans and the Tradioitionalists. For the first time in my life, I met face to face with “African pagans” as a faith in South Africa. This was when IFAPA convened its Second All-Africa Summit. Afrikology as a new academic program for the African traditional Religion was established. This was very shocking to me.

The other profound Inter-religious experience was an engagement with the RASTAFARI Religion. These hail in the heritage of the former Emperor of Ethiopia: Emperor Herus. One common concern was the quest for peace in all Africa.

Dialogue on religious tolerance, xenophobia and racism has featured predominantly in our debates. It was earmarked that all faiths

cherish tolerance and working for the common good. All holy books alluded together to this phenomenon.

In specific terms, I serve as the Youth moderator for IFAPA on the continent where different youth programs feature. I host Interfaith events on National television, coordinate youth seminars with local communities, participate in Social Forum, Solidarity visits and attend interfaith spiritual celebrations.

I sit on the Commission of IFAPA where I represent the grass root voice of the voiceless, such as the former child soldiers, landmine survivors, former abductees and a wide range of people with disabilities. I share such rich painful heritage with faith leaders and diagnose cries for healthy solutions.

If given chance to participate in CPWR events, I trust that, a lot would be shared for betterment of humanity.

Source: Provided by Sheikh Hamid Amir Byamugenzi

Title: ***Qantara.de***  
Address: c/o Deutsche Welle Online Kurt-Schumacher-Straße 3  
D-53113 Bonn  
Germany  
Contact: kontakt@qantara.de  
Web: http://www.qantara.de  
Description: The Arabic word "qantara" means "bridge." The Internet portal Qantara.de represents the concerted effort of the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (Federal Center for Political Education), Deutsche Welle, the Goethe Institut and the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations) to promote dialogue with the Islamic world. Qantara.de introduces various activists, initiatives and projects, providing theoretical background as well.  
Source: http://www.qantara.de

Title: ***The Organization of the Islamic Conference***  
Address: PO Box 178  
Jeddah-21411  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
Phone: 6900001  
Contact: cabinet@oic-oci.org  
Web: http://www.oic-oci.org  
Description: The Organization aims to strengthen Islamic solidarity among Member States, cooperation in the political, economic, social, cultural and scientific fields, the struggle of all Muslim people to safeguard their dignity, independence and national rights. The Organization works to eliminate racial discrimination and all forms of colonialism, and create a favorable atmosphere for the promotion of cooperation and understanding

between Member States and other countries. A six-member OIC senior level delegation has recently concluded a three-week long tour in an Interfaith Dialogue Program conducted in different cities in the United States of America between June 8 and July 1, 2007. In this program, they were briefed on the federal system of the United States and held interfaith dialogue discourse with civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, congregations and charity groups in the various cities which they visited.

Source: <http://www.oic-oci.org>.

Title: ***Asian Muslim Action Network***

Address: House 1562/113  
Soi 1/1 Mooban Pibul, Pracharaj Road Bangkok 10800  
Thailand

Phone: (662) 913-0196

Contact: [aman@arf-asia.org](mailto:aman@arf-asia.org)

Web: <http://www.arf-asia.org/aman.php>

Description: AMAN is a network of progressive Muslims in Asia, seeking to respond in a small way to the numerous challenges that the people in Asia are facing: elite corruption, materialistic life style, increasing ethnic tension, violence against women and children and environment degradation. AMAN's goal is to promote human dignity and social justice for all, by encouraging intercultural and inter religious dialogue and cooperation. Thus, one of its major activities is interfaith dialogue on major issues such as peace, human rights, ethnicity and globalization.

Source: <http://www.arf-asia.org/aman.php>

Title: ***Liberal Muslim Network***

Address: Jalan Utan Kayu, No. 68H  
Jakarta Timur,  
Jakarta, Indonesia 13120

Phone: +6221 851 6868

Contact: [redaksi@islamlib.com](mailto:redaksi@islamlib.com)

Web: <http://www.islamlib.com>

Description: LMN's missions are: develop the liberal Islamic interpretations that are appropriate to our principles, and disseminate it to as many people as possible; attempt to create dialogue rooms that are open and free from any pressures of conservatism. Only by the availability of open rooms for dialogues, the thought and Islamic action improvement could be well preserved; endeavor the formation of a fair and humanely social and political structure. LMN has produced campaigns, including on televisions and radios, which mainly focuses to spread our voices to gather more and wider public attention and eliminate the possibilities of inter-and-cross

religion conflict in Indonesia. These campaigns are broadcasted across private and state owned stations, including some community owned station around Indonesia. The Network recently produced two campaigns, Violence and Plural's Religion in Indonesia and The Tolerate and Plural of Islam.

Source: <http://www.islamlib.com>

Title: ***Masyarakat Dialog Antar Agama***

Address: Jl. Imam Bonjol 39  
Jakarta 10310  
Indonesia

Phone: (62 21) 327478

Contact: obelix@link.net.id; cutmutiah@dnet.net.id

Web: <http://ecumene.org/MADIA/MADIA.htm>

Description: MADIA, the Society for Interreligious Dialogue (SIDA) strives to respect and celebrate diversity, which is a gift from God the Creator and Protector of Life; to cease all political engineering practices that use religious symbols to nurture a culture of violence in Indonesia; to stop all divisive practices which pit religious, ethnic, racial and social groups against one another, and which, if unchecked, will lead to the destruction of society and the nation as a whole; to work to create a climate and opportunities for meetings between diverse religions, ethnic groups, races and social groupings, which allow honest, open, critical and respectful discussions between them; to promote dialogue and compassion as means for resolving political disputes, conflicts of interest and differences of perception; to demand responsibility and accountability from the political elite and power-holders for all abuses of diversity, which have placed a heavy burden on the people of Indonesia.

Source: <http://ecumene.org/MADIA/MADIA.htm>

Title: ***The International Center for Islam and Pluralism***

Address: : Jl. Metro Alam V, Blok TC 50  
No 11 Pondok Indah  
Jakarta Selatan  
Indonesia

Phone: +62-21-7659604

Contact: [info@icipglobal.org](mailto:info@icipglobal.org)

Web: <http://www.icipglobal.org>

Description: ICIP's main mission is to disseminate the ideas of Indonesia's moderate and progressive Muslims to audiences in both Indonesia and around the world. It will also disseminate the ideas of international moderate and progressive Muslim thinkers to the Indonesian people. Regional Workshop on Education on Pluralism and Multiculturalism

(November 25-27, 2004) formed part of the program 'Strengthening the understanding and attitudes towards pluralism and multiculturalism among young journalists and young religious leaders', and was conducted in cooperation with the European Commission.

Source: <http://www.icipglobal.org>

Title: ***American Islamic Congress***

Address: 1718 M Street NW, #243  
Washington, DC 20036

Phone: 202-595-3160

Fax: 202-315-5838

Email: [info@aicongress.org](mailto:info@aicongress.org)

Web: <http://www.aicongress.org/>

Description: The American Islamic Congress (AIC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to building interfaith and interethnic understanding. Our organization grew out of the ashes of September 11. We believe American Muslims must take the lead in building tolerance and fostering a respect for human rights and social justice at home and throughout the Muslim world. Within the Muslim community, we are building a coalition around the agenda of unequivocal denunciation of terrorism, extremism, and hate speech. Reaching out to all people of conscience, we promote genuine interfaith dialogue and educate about the diversity within Islam.

The AIC has offices in Washington, Boston, and Iraq. Our international development programs have included helping to rebuild the Iraqi school system by training teachers, restoring school buildings, and providing direct aid to students. We currently run a women's empowerment program out of several education centers in Iraq, where we train 150 emerging civic leaders in management techniques, democratic values, and civil society outreach. To expand our role as a bridge between the US and the Middle East, we have launched a new campaign - called "Hands Across the Mideast" - to unite Americans and Middle East reformers to promote civil rights in the region.

Source: <http://www.aicongress.org/about.html>

Title: ***The Islamic Cultural Center***

Address: 146 Park Road  
London NW8 7RG  
United Kingdom

Phone: 0207 725 2-213/152

Fax: 0207 724 0493

Email: [info@iccuk.org](mailto:info@iccuk.org)

Web: <http://www.iccuk.org/>

Description: The Interfaith Department at the ICC started in 2003. The main aim of this activity as described by Dr Ahmad Al -Dubayan, is to promote the message of understanding and respect between Muslim and Non-Muslim communities throughout the UK and Europe. It is here also very important always to help Non-Muslim communities and organizations understand that Islam as a peaceful religion and that we as Muslims open to dialogue on all matters regarding faith.

The Interfaith Department manages many areas such as group visits, training for Non-Muslim Professionals, consultation with Government/Non Government organisations on Race Relations, meetings with the Metropolitan Police on Race relations, lectures and conferences on Islam in Universities, colleges, schools, Churches and Synagogues etc.

We receive some 2000 letters, telephone calls, e-mails, faxes and other correspondence every month.

Source: <http://www.iccuk.org/page.php?section=interfaith&page=interfaith>

Title: ***Muslim Interfaith Council***

Address: 1684 Decoto Rd. Suite 173  
Union City, CA 94587

Email: [feedback@voiceforislam.com](mailto:feedback@voiceforislam.com)

Web: <http://www.voiceforislam.com>

Description: MIC Mission statement: To engage others of different faiths in dialogue and rational discourse about the similarities and differences of our respective religious traditions and to inculcate and facilitate a general understanding of these traditions.

It is now an established fact that Islam is one of the largest and fastest growing religions in the world. But how much do you really know about Islam? -A faith that resides in the hearts and minds of over a billion people in almost every country around the globe. Well, this is precisely why MIC was founded by a group of everyday average Muslims in the Fremont Bay Area. What we simply want to do is to inform you about this great religious tradition that is very much misunderstood in these turbulent times.

Source: <http://www.voiceforislam.com/AboutUs.html>

Title: ***The Muslim Network for Baha'i Rights***

Address: N/A

Web: <http://www.bahairights.org/>

Description: The Muslim network for Baha'i rights is developed by a group of Muslim interfaith activists who believe in tolerance, coexistence and freedom. We created this site to promote human rights, religious freedom and respect within the Arab and Muslim world. We strongly believe that such values should apply it to all people equally



regardless of their faith, cultural differences, political stance or nationality. We are making this effort not only as believers of freedom, but also for the sake of a better and more productive society.

Source: <http://www.bahairights.org/about/>

Title: ***The World Council For Muslim Interfaith Relations***  
Address: 200 E. 10th Street #518  
New York, New York, 10003  
Phone: 212.696.6495  
Email: [amiralislam@yahoo.com](mailto:amiralislam@yahoo.com)  
Web: <http://www.manrilla.net/wcmir/>  
Description: The World Council of Muslims for Interfaith Relations (WCMIR) is committed to fostering mutual understanding and friendly relations among people of different faiths. It strives to create a moral force, through working together with conscientious people of the world, against all forms of oppression, injustice and violence.

The WCMIR focuses on issues such as protection of human dignity, social and economic justice, and eradication of poverty and exploitation of the environment and earth resources.

Objectives

- To provide an international forum for mutual consultation and collective thinking for Muslims engaged in inter-faith activities.
- To create awareness among Muslims regarding their responsibilities towards the promotion of tolerance, peace, justice, and concern for their fellow human beings.
- To endeavor to resolve inter-faith and inter-cultural conflicts at all levels through dialogue and other initiatives for peace and to persuade nations and groups within countries to strictly observe universally recognized ethical and legal norms.
- To strive to end impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of crimes against humanity. To undertake measures towards the eradication of all exploitation of the weak and defenseless.

Source: <http://www.manrilla.net/wcmir/>

## **Pagan**

Title: ***The Iberic Pagan Union***  
Phone: (+34)663308724  
Contact: [winterseidhr@gmail.com](mailto:winterseidhr@gmail.com)

Description: The Iberic Pagan Union is a nationwide association in Spain, and works to provide correct and exact information to the media. The Union promotes brotherhood and friendship among pagans, and support mutual understanding among differing religious traditions. The Union encourages its members to participate in various programs offered by different religious traditions, especially in the region of Catalunya where the Friends of UNESCO has worked for interreligious dialogue. About 70-75% of the Union members work for the group.

Source: Provided by Aitziber Conesa Madinabeitia, Secretary

Title: ***Lady Liberty League***  
Address: Circle Sanctuary  
PO Box 9 Barneveld,  
WI 53507  
USA  
Phone: (608) 924-2216  
Contact: [liberty@circlesanctuary.org](mailto:liberty@circlesanctuary.org)  
Web: <http://www.circlesanctuary.org/liberty>  
Description: Founded in 1985 by Selena Fox, Lady Liberty League (LLL) is the religious freedom support service of Circle Sanctuary, an international Wiccan church and Pagan resource center headquartered in Wisconsin. LLL provides information and networking assistance to individuals and organizations concerned with religious freedom issues pertaining to Wiccan ways, Paganism, and other forms of Nature religions. LLL members include specialists in a variety of focus areas, including public relations, countering harassment, employment issues, child custody issues, military affairs, law enforcement relations, legal affairs, interfaith relations, scholars support, and others.

Source: <http://www.circlesanctuary.org/liberty>

Title: ***The New England Witches Alliance***  
Address: PO Box 412,  
Gloucester, MA 01931  
USA  
Phone: 978-865-4606  
Web: <http://www.newenglandwitchesalliance.org>  
Description: The New England Witches Alliance is family-run group of Witches and Pagans located in Gloucester, Massachusetts. Our group was founded on Samhain 2004, with the goal of promoting awareness and tolerance of all religions, and educating the public about the myths associated with modern-day Witchcraft.

Source: <http://www.newenglandwitchesalliance.org>

Title: ***Earth Spirit and the Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue***  
Address: The EarthSpirit Community  
PO Box 723  
Williamsburg, MA 01096  
Phone: 413-238-4240  
Contact: Deirdre@earthspirit.com  
Description: Director Deirdre Arthen describes The EarthSpirit Community as:  
a Pagan organization which has been involved in interfaith work for more than 25 years and has been associated with the Parliament of the World's Religions since 1993. She writes: Since our traditions teach so specifically about the value and sacredness of diversity, we are committed to learning about and celebrating the many ways that humans manifest their spiritual nature. In recent years we have been excited by the movement in some other religions toward a conscious concern about the well-being of the Earth, and since we also have teachings about humans having an integral place in the web of creation --- not separate from or superior to it --- we feel we have something significant to bring to the discussion, as well as much to gain by listening and learning from others who are also committed to caring for our planet. I will write about one such connection here.

Early in the spring of 2007, EarthSpirit joined a Massachusetts interfaith group called Religious Witnesses for the Earth to support and participate in The Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue.

After a month of planning, our first active participation in the effort was at a benefit concert, as MotherTongue, our ritual performance group which performed at the Parliaments in Chicago and Barcelona, joined a varied line-up of religious musicians including traditional Indian sitar, a gospel choir from Amherst College, Japanese Buddhist flute music, and Hindu chanting. It was an uplifting evening, and the diversity of style made it rich in texture and accessible to all who attended.

While I have participated in many interfaith events over the years, this one was particularly moving for me. The threat of climate change goes far beyond religious boundaries, affecting everyone the world over and especially endangering those who already have the very least. To know that we, who have fully integrated our spirituality into our lives in so many different ways, can come together to work at addressing a problem so great in scope, gives me hope that we bring together a real global alliance that can actually make a difference for us all.

Source: Provided by Deirdre Arthen, Director of The EarthSpirit Community

Title: ***Wiccan Interfaith Council***  
Address: PO Box 24  
Schererville, Indiana 46375-9998

USA  
Phone: 219-308-3743  
Contact: WiccanInterfaithCouncil@hotmail.com  
Web: <http://WiccanInterfaithCouncil.itgo.com>  
Description: The Wiccan Interfaith Council is an international fellowship of Wiccans, Pagan, Witches, and Heathens. Our global community strives to promote greater understanding and appreciation of Wicca, through interfaith/intrafaith services, educational forums, and social activism.  
Source: <http://WiccanInterfaithCouncil.itgo.com>

Title: ***The Pagan Federation UK***  
Address: 22 Joiners Way,  
Lavendon, Buckinghamshire,  
MK46 4JF  
England  
Phone: 01234 241583  
Contact: [nowlan491@btinternet.com](mailto:nowlan491@btinternet.com)  
Web: <http://www.paganfed.org>  
Description: The Pagan Federation seeks to support all Pagans in their personal and public life, to help ensure that they have the same rights as the followers of other beliefs and members of other religions; to promote a positive profile for Pagans and Paganism and to provide information on Pagan paths and beliefs to the media, official bodies and the greater community; to facilitate effective communication, education and dialogue within and between Pagan communities and with non Pagans, through publications and events. And the Pagan Federation promotes contact and dialogue between the various branches of Paganism and other religious traditions.  
Source: Provided by Carol Nowlan, Interfaith Manager

Title: ***The Pagan Federation Paine Canada***  
Address: PO Box 876  
Station "B", Ottawa  
ON, K1P 5P9  
Canada  
Contact: [info@pfpc.ca](mailto:info@pfpc.ca)  
Web: <http://www.pfpc.ca>  
Description: The purpose of PFPC is to improve and protect the reputation of Pagans and Paganism in Canada by: providing practical, accurate and effective information about Paganism to the public, the media, public bodies and government agencies; providing contact among Pagan groups and seekers; fostering interaction and dialogue among the various branches of Canadian Paganism, both Anglophone and Francophone.

PFPC belongs to the Ontario Multifaith Council, a government-funded body that works on ensuring religious service for all faiths for people in Ontario hospitals.

Source: <http://www.pfpc.ca>

Title: ***Ordre Druidique des Enfants de la Terre***

Contact: [odet@druides.org](mailto:odet@druides.org)

Web: <http://www.druides.org>

Description: Ordre Druidique des Enfants de la Terre (Druidic Order of the Children of the Earth) directs its research and its work in a direction that is resolutely polytheist. Its objectives are the practice of Pagan Druidry, working with Sacred Sites and honoring the ancestors adapting this knowledge to our modern needs of spirituality. In order to make a link between the different traditions following the same orientations, the ODET is also the Circle of the children of the Earth, a circle which allows different primordial traditions to communicate. It is a fellowship of native religions. Every year for Beltane, our summer festival which takes place around May 1st, the order organizes a huge meeting gathering Druids who come from the whole Europe. The ODET will be present during the EYID 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and participate in the organization of interreligious manifestations.

Source: Provided by Syd Merle, the Founder

Title: ***The Druid Network***

Address: PO Box 3533  
Whichford, Shipston on Stour, Warwickshire  
CV36 5YB  
England.

Phone: 0779-229-4414

Contact: [mark.roscher@gmail.com](mailto:mark.roscher@gmail.com)

Web: <http://druidnetwork.org>

Description: The Druid Network provides information on the principles and practice of Druidry for the benefit of all, and to inspire and facilitate that practice for those who have committed themselves to this spiritual path. Many of our Members are directly involved in interfaith work as celebrants, school teachers and governors, councilors and counselors. Some Interfaith groups in the UK remain historically averse to Paganism and Druidry, and we work with them where we can to dispel fears and work hand in hand to promote tolerance between people of all faiths and none. We are not evangelical but neither are we a closet-hidden organization.

Source: Provided by Mark Rosher, Interfaith Co-ordinator.

Title: ***The Covenant of the Goddess***  
Address: PO Box 1226  
Berkeley, CA 94701  
USA  
Contact: info@cog.org  
Web: http://www.cog.org  
Description: The Covenant is incorporated as a non-profit religious organization in California, though it has grown to be an international organization. It is a confederation of covens and solitaires of various traditions, which share in the worship of the Goddess and the Old Gods and subscribe to a common code of ethics. In recent years, the Covenant has taken part in spiritual and educational conferences, interfaith outreach, large public rituals, environmental activism, community projects and social action, as well as efforts to correct negative stereotypes and promote accurate media portrayals.  
Source: http://www.cog.org

## **New Religious Movements**

Title: ***Center for Sacred Sciences***  
Address: 1430 Willamette St. #164  
Eugene, OR 97401  
USA  
Contact: publications@centerforsacredsciences.org  
Web: http://www.centerforsacredsciences.org/  
Description: Thomas J. McFarlane, Publications Director at the Center for Sacred Sciences, writes: As part of our contribution to interreligious understanding, the Center for Sacred Sciences publishes an online journal, Holos: Forum for a New Worldview <http://www.holosforum.org/>. The journal publishes articles and interviews that help promote the development and dissemination of a new sacred worldview. The subject matter encompassed by Holos includes topics related to mystical teachings, especially those demonstrating the unanimity of the testimony of mystics across traditions, cultures, and times; the relationship between scientific and mystical truths; the development of a sacred worldview; mathematics as a sacred language that can provide a link between scientific and spiritual ways of understanding the world; and the nature of mystical truth and its relationship to contemporary society, philosophy, and science. Holos appeals not only to scholars but also to the educated spiritual practitioner, spiritual teachers, and the clergy in various spiritual traditions.

Past Issues of Holos include the following interviews: “Early Taoist Contemplation and Its Resonance in the American Academy: An Interview with Harold Roth;” “Lack and Liberation in Self and Society: An Interview with David Loy;” “Integrating Science and Religion: An Interview with Alan Wallace.”

It has been inspiring to personally connect with the scholars we have interviewed for Holos. Their visionary contributions have been encouraging to our own work and efforts. The Holos interviews themselves, we hope, communicate in a personal way some of the stimulating one-on-one engagement we have enjoyed with these scholars. We invite you to read the interviews for a taste of our rewarding personal experience talking with them.

Source: Provided by Thomas J. McFarlane, Publications Director, Center for Sacred Sciences

Title: ***The Interfaith Church of Metaphysics***

Address: School of Metaphysics  
163 Moon Valley Rd.  
Windyville, MO 65783

Phone: 417-345-8411

Contact: som@som.org

Web: www.som.org and www.peacedome.org

Description: Dr. Laurel Clark writes: One of the main ways that the Interfaith Church of Metaphysics works with other communities is through a global endeavor called One Voice. We ask people to read the Universal Peace Covenant (attached.) This is a document penned by over 2 dozen spiritual teachers in response to the Global Ethic presented at the 1993 Parliament. We ask people to read it at midnight December 31st, wherever they are, to produce a united consciousness of peace across the globe. As people read it at midnight their time, this makes a 24-hour wave of peace. We also ask people to read it as One Voice at 1 pm Central Daylight Time (noon Mountain Time, 11 a.m. Pacific Time, etc.) on July 26th. This is the first day of the Mayan Calendar. The Mayan Calendar operates on a 13-month, 28-day cycle. Called Natural Time, the belief is that if people lived according to Natural Time there would be a more peaceful world. As everyone on the globe reads it at the same time, this creates a concentrated consciousness of peaceful thought.

I have participated in reading the Universal Peace Covenant as One Voice in the World's First Peace Dome on the College of Metaphysics campus in Windyville, MO every hour as it becomes the New Year around the world. This global wave of peace is very profound. I have been able to feel and sense the resonance with other souls. People of all ages, from 2 years old to 70, have joined us. People of all faiths have joined us, as have people from across the world. I have communicated with representatives

of the World Peace Prayer Society from around the world who have joined in this endeavor, and have made friends across the planet by recognizing our common humanity.

Source: Dr. Laurel Clark, ordained minister in the Interfaith Church of Metaphysics

Title: ***Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University***

Address: PO Box No 2, Mount Abu 30750  
Rajasthan, India

Phone: (91) 2974-238261

Web: [www.bkwsu.org](http://www.bkwsu.org)

Description Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU) have been teaching Raja Yoga meditation in all areas of society across the world since being founded in India in the 1930s.

Through its 8,500 centres in over 100 countries, the University has reached out to individuals and a diverse range of community groups. Activities have included developing leadership potential for young people, working with inmates and staff in the criminal justice system, training for those working in social services, the health service and education, serving the spiritual needs of women and men, working with the differently-abled, and assisting in interreligious dialogue.

As a visionary leader, the founder, Brahma Baba, inspired many through his life of peace, tolerance and compassion. He envisioned a time when people of all backgrounds would come together to rediscover and develop the spiritual dimension of their lives. One of his most revolutionary inspirations was to place women in the major leadership roles of the University.

The BKWSU has general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and consultative status with UNICEF.

The Brahma Kumaris' approach to interfaith dialogue is based on the spiritual truth that '*Whatever is within is reflected without.*' The inner state of human beings creates the outer state of the world. Real dialogue, therefore, depends upon the awareness of the inner being. To know others with clarity, we first need to give time to know the self. Value for the self enables us to value the dignity of each human being. The inner journey in silence - the deep feeling that it brings of our own gifts from the Divine - prepares us for dialogue, giving gives us the inner security and freedom to truly listen and learn from others. In dialogue we learn how to accept each other's ideas - and inspire others to do the same.

For over thirty years, the Brahma Kumaris have been helping to bring together people of different faiths and cultures, and from all levels of society, to experience and express their shared spirituality. This work is now taking place in well over 100 countries where the University has



centres and activities, and is based on the belief that a deeper understanding between faiths, together with acceptance and respect, will contribute to a culture of peace and non-violence in our world community.

In many countries, Brahma Kumaris representatives serve on committees of local interfaith organisations, host local activities, and take an active part in religious education advisory committees. For example, in Dunedin, New Zealand, BKs have for the past 13 years co-ordinated an annual *Interfaith Week of Prayer for World Peace*, which includes a public service as well as a service at the University. In Adelaide, Australia, BKs regularly participate in the Multifaith Association of South Australia. On the other side of the globe, in Uruguay, BKs participate in Forum Interreligious as well as in the Space of Inter-religious Dialogue at UNESCO's Montevideo Centre.

In 2005 BKWSU brought together 43 religious leaders from 15 countries in Delhi and Mount Abu, India, for a dialogue entitled *The Inner Voice of Peace*, which began with a meeting with H.E. The President of India, Dr A P J Abdul Kalam.

Since 1993 The Brahma Kumaris have played an active role in the Parliaments of the World's Religions and the Assembly of Religious Leaders, serving on the organizing committees and hosting the launch in the UK of the *Year of Inter-religious Understanding and Co-operation* in 1993.

At a global level, the Brahma Kumaris work closely with leading international interfaith organisations, including:

- **World Congress of Faiths (WCF):** for over 20 years the Brahma Kumaris have worked closely with WCF in planning and hosting events. In 1993 the BKs joined the WCF international committee to plan for the Year of Inter-religious Understanding and Co-operation marked in honour of the centenary of the first Parliament of the World's Religions, and together with WCF hosted the UK launch of that year.

[www.worldfaiths.org](http://www.worldfaiths.org)

- **United Religions Initiative (URI):** BKs have been represented on the Global Council and are actively participating in Co-operation Circles worldwide. BKs hosted the first URI European Conference at the Global Retreat Centre near Oxford in 1997. [www.uri.org](http://www.uri.org)

- **The Global Peace Initiative of Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders:** Brahma Kumaris support the Initiative's Women's Partnership for Peace in the Middle East and the Global Ethics and Universal Education for Values project. [www.gpiw.org](http://www.gpiw.org)

Source: Provided by Maureen Goodman, Program Director of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, UK

## Shinto

Title: ***Interfaith Prayer***

Description: Shinto representatives were a part of the Interfaith Prayer held on Wednesday, September 11, 2002. It was the Annual Interfaith Service of Commitment to the Work of the United Nations was observed at St. Bartholomews Church in New York City. It was held on the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington DC and dedicated to victims of violence throughout the world.

Source: <http://www.shinto.org/isf/eng/top-e.htm>

Title: ***Globalization and the Sacred Forests and Groves***

Description: This event was Co-Sponsored by The Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement-International, and Religions for Peace-USA: a Midday Workshop during the 59th Annual DPI/NGO Conference held on September 8, 2006, in New York.

In conjunction with the 2006 International Year of Desert and Desertification proclaimed by the United Nations, this workshop aimed at presenting how sacred forests and groves of Shinto shrines have been protected and developed as important assets of human life in Japan and the rest of the world by showing concrete achievements on the basis of long activity experiences of the sponsoring parties of this workshop.”

Source: <http://www.shinto.org/isf/eng/top-e.htm>

Title: ***Spiritual and Practical Values of Martial Arts and Chrysanthemum Day***

Description: “ISF sponsored a Spiritual and Practical Values of Martial Arts event as part of NGO program in recognition of the 58th Annual DPI/NGO Conference held at the United Nations, September 7, 8, 9. Over 80 people attended the event on Friday evening, September 9th at the Japan Society Murase Room.”

Source: <http://www.shinto.org/isf/eng/top-e.htm>

## Sikh

Title: ***The Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria***

Address: PO Box 85, Mulgrave,  
Vic. 3170  
Australia

Contact: [info@sikhinterfaithvic.org.au](mailto:info@sikhinterfaithvic.org.au)  
(+03) 956-03374

Web: [www.sikhinterfaithvic.org.au](http://www.sikhinterfaithvic.org.au)

Description: The Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria (SICV) is an incorporated non-profit organisation, with a vision to create greater awareness and understanding of Sikhs and Sikhism in the Australian community. Since its formation on 1st September 2002, SICV's mission has been to represent Sikhs on the multi-faith platform in Victoria. It has been invited, time and again to interfaith events and approached by government agencies to make representation on issues concerning the Sikhs in Victoria. SICV promotes and works for dialogue, respect and understanding among all religions.

The latest participation in Multi-faith organizations, public forums: "Founders of Faith" (19th August 2007) a forum organized by the Ahmadiya Muslim Community; a ladies only event. Members of the Bahai, Christian, Indigenous Community, Muslim, and Sikh Communities participated and attended this event. A Presentation on the "Sikh Articles of Faith; with particular reference to Kirpan" 14th August 2007 (to address local media concerns about the kirpan); at the Whitehorse Interfaith Network. An Introduction to Sikhism with particular reference to Sikh Patient's Pastoral Care needs at Hospitals to staff at Kingston Centre, 4th June 2007. "*Significance of Symbolism*," presentation by Buddhist, Jewish and Sikh Faiths at a forum organized by the Whitehorse Interfaith Network, 4th March 2007. 2nd July 2006 Sikh- Christian Conversation between the Catholic Interfaith Committee and Sikh Community; on the topic: "*Christian View of the Word (the Living Word) and the Sikh View of the Word (Shabad Guru)*." There were 15 attendees from each Faith.

The SICV represents the Sikh Community on multi-faith organizations: Our presence in the networks enables us to make representations about the Sikh faith to the members and be involved in interfaith activities. These organizations include: World Conference of Religions for Peace–Australia; Premier's Multi-faith Leaders Forum; Victoria Police Multi-faith Council; Leaders of Faith Communities Forum; Interfaith; Network of the City of Greater Dandenong; Darebin Interfaith Council; City of Hume Interfaith Network; City of Kingston Faith Network; City of Knox Interfaith Network; Manningham Interfaith

Network; Moreland Interfaith Gathering; Melbourne Interfaith Network; Whitehorse Interfaith Network.

SICV's Representation of the Sikh Community at Major Public Forums: 'Religion, Cultural Diversity, and Social Cohesion in Contemporary Australia,' Australian Multicultural Foundation 2002; 'Oaths and Affirmations' Victorian Parliament Law Review Committee, 2002; 'Safer Streets and Homes.' Victorian Multicultural Commission: A submission on the State Government's Discussion Paper on Victorian Multicultural Act; A submission to the Department of Justice on behalf of the Gurdwaras to protect the legitimate rights of the Sikhs for use of the kirpan as a matter of religious observance; Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2005. SICV made a submission to the Department of Human Services and the Crematoria in ensuring that Sikh rites would be observed during cremations; Service Delivery Model-Focus Group Discussion, Victoria Police Operations Coordination Department, July 2005.

Participation in Major Community Events: "SICV proudly participated in the following major event: Inauguration of the Spiritual Centre RMIT University October 2004; Exhibition of Religious Artifacts at Moreland Council October 2004; Dedication of Sacred Space Casey Hospital Berwick November 2004; Multi-faith prayer held at Federation Square for Tsunami victims January 2005; Palm Sunday Peace March and Gathering. April 2005; Prayers at the Commemorating event held at St Mary's College University of Melbourne for 60th Anniversary of the Bombing of Hiroshima. August 2005; Interfaith Service of Commitment to the work of United Nations, to mark the opening of 60th session of General Assembly. September 2005; Premier's Multi-faith Forum September 2005; Signing of the Community Accord. October 2005."

SICV's Public Forums and Submissions: SICV represented the Sikh Community at major public forums such as: 'Religion, Cultural Diversity, and Social Cohesion in Contemporary Australia,' Australian Multicultural Foundation 2002; 'Oaths and Affirmations' Victorian Parliament Law Review Committee, 2002; 'Safer Streets and Homes.' Victorian Multicultural Commission: A submission on the State Government's Discussion Paper on Victorian Multicultural Act; A submission to the Department of Justice on behalf of the Gurdwaras to protect the legitimate rights of the Sikhs for use of the kirpan as a matter of religious observance; Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2005. SICV made a submission to the Department of Human Services and the Crematoria in ensuring that Sikh rites would be observed during cremations; Service Delivery Model-Focus Group Discussion, Victoria Police Operations Coordination Department, July 2005.

Gurdwara Tours: Gurdwara tours are an excellent way of establishing dialogue and sharing information with the Australian community about our religious practices. As a member of various interfaith networks SICV is able to invite people to visit the Gurdwaras.

SICV conducts a number of tours each year at the Blackburn and Keysborough Gurdwaras for school and university students, multi-faith groups, security agencies, or any other individual or group interested in obtaining basic knowledge of Sikh religion and culture. Visitors are usually informed of our practices of sangat (congregation prayer) and pangat (sharing in langar). We often receive positive comments from visitors from their experience in the Gurdwara as noted below: Tour participants are pleasantly surprised to note that the Sikh Faith is inclusive. Sikh faith and hospitality are one. Able to love this people meet with them. They are so similar in their philosophical basis/unison.(A Christian visitor) yet still able to recognise differences. Generous giving of themselves in peace, compassion and love. Women equal in the Sikh faith.”

Source: <http://www.sikhinterfaithvic.org.au/Activities.htm>; E-mail report of latest interfaith activates by Gurdarshan Singh Gill President, Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria, August 28, 2007.

Title: ***Sikh Nari Manch***

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Description: Founded in 1998, Sikh Nari Manch (SNM) aims to empower and raise the self esteem of women of all ages and backgrounds particularly of Sikh women and enable them to take greater control of their lives making a positive contribution to the society in which they live. It also aims to preserve the past, inspire the heritage of the youth and promote community cohesion. The objectives of SNM include focus such as: To provide development opportunities for Sikh girls/women through music and singing. To promote understanding and links with other faith communities. To promote understanding and links with other faith communities. To organize and participate in Interfaith events and raise money for local, national and international charities through a sponsored walk.

Millennium Celebrations/Interfaith Events: On 16th December 1999 a multifaith festival was held in Birmingham Chamberlain Square organised by Birmingham City Council and the Rotary Club in which groups representing different faiths participated. These groups included the Sikh Nari Manch Choir proudly representing the Sikhs as well as gospel, and school choirs, the Salvation Army, and a Hindu group.

To celebrate the arrival of the millennium the SNM organized an Akhand Path from the 30th. Dec. 1999 - 1st. Jan. 2000, at the home of Bibi Manjeet Kaur in Yardley. Since then the Choir has participated in many interfaith events such as International Music Festival at Greenwich Park organised by the Music Village, Interfaith Concert at Symphony Hall, Birmingham organised by the Friends of Birmingham. The Choir has performed many times at the Birmingham Cathedral, Council House, Cenral Library and other libraries, Museums, Churches, Friends Halls, indu Temples etc.

Regular SNM interfaith events: SNM organizes annual interfaith events such as "Spiritual Weekend Retreat", "Interfaith Mothers Day" "Sikh Awareness Day" and Multifaith Senior Citizens Luncheons" and participates in interfaith events organised by other organisations.

A Spiritual Residential Weekend For Women: The Sikh Nan Manch UK organised a spiritual residential weekend especially for women to raise their self esteem and support their physical, mental, recreational and spiritual needs, from 5th - 7th of July 2002 at the Bilberry Hill Residential Centre, Rose Hill, Rednal, Birmingham, B45 8RT.

50 ladies from different age groups and backgrounds took part in this residential camp. They came from all over the country, such as Glasgow, Edinburgh, North London, New Southgate, Hounslow, Stanwell, Slough, Coventry, Banbury, Oxford, Wolverhampton, Walsall and different parts of Birmingham. Apart from the walks in the bills, yoga and aerobic exercises, there were discussions, lectures and work shops on the issues affecting women, information and counselling sessions as well as meditation classes.

SNM posters: (a) "Bilingual posters." Over 30000 posters have been produced and distributed free of charge all over the UK and abroad. The audiences for these posters are: younger generation in every Sikh home, Gurdwaras, Sikh organizations and educational institutions e.g. schools, colleges, universities etc. (b) "Bilingual Sikh Prayer Books for Hospitals." Research carried out by the SNM team, has highlighted a significant area of need within our community. It has come to our attention that the UK has no facilities or resources for supplying inter-faith prayer books to institutes such as hospitals, prisons and probation centers. In an effort to remedy this situation, the SNM have held a sponsored walk to raise funds and place the above scripture books in a few hospitals within Birmingham. However the SNM would like to see this project carried out nationally. (c) Bilingual Sikh Resource For Schools: The 1992 Education Act allows Sikhism to be taught in schools however very little or no resources have been allocated to this cause. The SNM have taken a positive step and are hoping to provide the above bilingual materials nationally to as many schools as possible.

Source: <http://www.sikhnamanach.com/home.asp>

Title: ***The Australian Sikh Association***

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Description: Established in 1969, Australian Sikh Association Inc (ASA) aims to set a high standard in serving the needs of the Sikh Community in Australia, especially the community members located around North-Western, Hills, Western Regions of Sydney Metro area. ASA also aims to contribute to the wider Australian Society, by the way charitable activities and by actively engaging in the development of the Multicultural Australia, in the 21st Century. At ASA all governance is based on and in line with the high moral and ethical principles as enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and as per the rules set out in the Australian and NSW Law as well as the ASA Constitution. In addition the focus of ASA is to serve the spiritual, religious, cultural and social needs of the Sikh Community and establish charitable and welfare programs for the community, including: Programs to promote an understanding of the Sikh philosophy, religion and culture, and to provide a common meeting ground for the exchange ideas with other community groups to promote interfaith dialogue, tolerance and harmony. Facilities to cater for the religious and spiritual needs of the Sikh Community (both in happy and unfortunate circumstances, e.g., Births, Deaths and Marriages).

Living in Harmony in Multicultural Australia: The ASA was awarded this grant under the "Community Grants Program 2004" for a 12-month project titled 'Promotion of Mutual Understanding & Respect in a Multicultural Society' by the CRC. The main focus of this project is to inform the wider Australian Community about Sikhs and Sikhism as well as to educate the Australian Sikhs about various religions and faiths practiced by fellow Australians. First event under this project was a day trip (on the 4th Dec 04) to The Nan Tien Buddhist Temple in Wollongong, where the participants learnt about Buddhism and visited the museum located in the temple."

Sikh Youth Resource Centre: The Sikh Youth Resource Centre Project has evolved over the past few years as a result of a strong demand from the Sikh Youth for structured programs and activities. ASA applied for a Community Development Grant from the Community Relations Commission (Government of NSW) and received a Grant to carry out an initial twelve month Project. ASA intends to continue this project beyond the initial period. Blacktown and Baulkham Hill Local Government Areas (LGAs) have one of the largest Sikh populations in Australia and yet NO formal program and support structures exist to cater for the cultural and community needs of the Sikh Youth. Even though they blend in with the



Australian culture without any support and appreciation for their own background, they lack any understanding of the new cultures of the multicultural NSW. The Sikh Youth Resource Centre (SYRC) will help organise various activities for the Sikh youth. This program would aim to empower the Sikh Youth by involving them in organising community, social and cultural activities, in order to achieve better understanding of differing cultural backgrounds, besides raising their self-esteem, leadership and communication.

Source: <http://www.asainc.org.au/projects.html#harmony>

Title: ***Sikh Art & Film Foundation***

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USA

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1-877-SIKHARTs

Web: <http://www.sikharts.com>

Description: Founded in 2001, the mission of Sikh Art & Film Foundation is two-fold: To promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the diversity of the Sikh people. To strengthen Sikh identity through increasing knowledge of Sikh history and culture. Our objectives are: To organize community-based programs in order to showcase various aspects of Sikh heritage; to provide a dynamic and inclusive forum for exploration and dialogue about the Sikh experience; to encourage independent artists and filmmakers working with Sikh themes; to cultivate a greater and more accurate understanding of the Sikh way of life within the American community at large; to build bridges of friendship and cooperation with other ethnic and religious communities; to present positive images of Sikhs through our policies of collection- development and curatorship; to promote respect for the inalienable human rights and dignity of all people.

I See No Stranger: Early Sikh Art and Devotion (September 16 2006 - January 27 2007) As found in the Sikh Art & Film Foundation, I See No Stranger: Early Sikh Art and Devotion opening at NYC's Rubin Museum of Art, will be comprised of approximately 100 works of art from the 16th through the 19th centuries, including paintings, drawings, textiles, metalwork, and photographs. The exhibition brings together works of art, from international and national collections, that identify core Sikh beliefs and explores the plurality of cultural traditions reflected in both the objects and ideals. The exhibition is supported by generous grants, artwork, and support from the Sikh Art and Film Foundation, the Sikh Foundation, and the Sikh community. "The Rubin Museum exhibition "I See No Stranger" wants at once to broaden and flesh out the picture for a non-Sikh audience, arranging paintings, manuscripts and tapestries for our education and delectation. On the whole, the exhibit satisfied my eyes more than it did



my curiosity. It left me wondering what makes Sikhism "strikingly modern," as a text panel asserts - and what, besides monotheism, constitutes its core," according to an article by Ariella Budick, "The world of the Sikh, explored - just a little," September 29, 2006.

According to IndiaPost.com, "NYT eulogizes Sikh religion in long review India Post News Service," 9-20-2006, "But what about Sikhism itself? Few Westerners have even basic information. How many people are aware that it was conceived as a universalist, open-door religion? Or that its view of society was radically egalitarian? Or that its holy book, the Adi Granth, far from being a catalog of sectarian dos and don'ts, is a bouquet of poetic songs, blending the fragrances of Hindu ragas, Muslim hymns and Punjabi folk tunes into a music of spiritual astonishment? This is precisely the information delivered by the small and absolutely beautiful show titled "I See No Stranger: Early Sikh Art and Devotion" at the Rubin Museum of Art in Chelsea. Vivid but concentrated, it presents, mostly through paintings, a culture's version of its own origins, the image of history shaped far more by hard work, pluralistic politics and mysticism than by militancy.

Understanding the Compassionate Concerns of Other Faiths: A Talk By Patwant Singh, July 22, 2006: Patwant Singh has written extensively on international affairs. His most recent books are *The Sikhs*, published in the U.S. by Alfred Knopf and in Canada by Random House (2001), and *Garland Around My Neck*, published in March 2001. He writes for newspapers and magazines and has covered a full range of subjects from national politics to international affairs, urbanism, the arts and other aspects of culture in his columns and public appearances. His articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Canada's Globe and Mail*, the U.K.'s *Independent*, and elsewhere.

Spinning Wheel Film Festival New York: A Celebration of Sikh Films (New York, September 17th - October 1st 2006): The Sikh Art & Film Foundation is pleased to announce the Spinning Wheel Film Festival New York, and for the first time in the New York area a major exhibition on Sikh Arts and Culture at the prestigious Rubin Museum of Art in Manhattan.

Source: [http://www.sikharts.com/Newsday\\_9-29-06\\_I\\_See\\_No\\_Stranger.pdf](http://www.sikharts.com/Newsday_9-29-06_I_See_No_Stranger.pdf)

Title: ***Guru Gobind Singh Foundation***

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Description: Founded in 1985, we, the Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, is drawn together by the shared vision of a future that is more just, humane, sustainable, accepting and affirming for all. "We strive to be one with God and Nature by understanding Guru Nanak's message in Gurbani and living the Sikh way of life." We achieve our mission through following steps: GGSF speaks for the rights and freedoms of Sikhs around the world; GGSF works to increase the participation of the Sikh community in the religious social, cultural, educational, economic and political fabric of the American society; The Foundation works for creating more awareness and understanding about Sikh faith and its traditions among Americans and around the world; GGSF works for society which promotes mutual respect, justice and human rights for all; GGSF promotes and works for dialogue, respect and understanding among all religions. GGSF has been active in the interfaith affairs since 1987 and basically initiated the involvement of the Sikhs in the interfaith affairs in local, national and international level. It has worked with Sikh religious leadership in Punjab on many issues. GGSF has also worked actively after the 9/11 issues affecting Sikhs as well.

Sikhs Kirtan at the Interfaith Concert in Washington attended by hundreds Washington: More than 1,400 persons experienced the sacred songs, dances or chants from nine world religions as they filled the magnificent sanctuary of Washington National Cathedral in the InterFaith Conference's 26th InterFaith Concert (November 14, 2006). The magnificent building of the Washington National Cathedral was filled in the November night. The carved arches added to splendor of the majestic building in the heart of America's capital. The high gothic ceiling reverberated with sweet sound of spiritual music of Sikh Kirtani Jatha and many other faith traditions. It was annual Inter faith Concert event. Sikhs, Hindu- Jains, Muslims, Bahais, Zoroastrian, Roman Catholic, Protestants, Jews participated in this multilingual and multi faith unique program. The honor of doing opening prayer was given to the Sikh community. Amrit Kaur, Secretary of Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, started the night's concert with following prayer, "O God, we your children of diverse faiths who call you by many names as we gather this evening in this magnificent building to sing songs of your glory. Please endow us with wisdom to understand that our strength lies in unity of diversity. Please enable us to relieve suffering of humanity inflicted by catastrophes like Katrina and earthquakes and make us an instrument of peace and goodwill in the world." She ended with the traditional prayer asking for the welfare of entire humanity, "Nanak naam chardi kalla, Tere Bhane sarbat ka bhalla." Meaning "May entire humanity prosper with thy Grace."

*Sikhs join an event paying tributes to America's Civil Rights Leader:* Washington, February 3, 2007 - Guru Gobind Singh Foundation participated in birthday celebration of civil rights leader Rev Martin Luther King Jr. to honor his legacy recently at Israel Baptist Church in

Washington, DC. In an Inter Faith Prayer service, specially designed to mark the celebration to honor Dr. King, glowing tributes were paid by various faith communities. Amrit Kaur, Secretary of Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, said, "Rev. Martin Luther King made love, non violence and peace as his tools to establish a just society with freedom and justice as its foundation. Dr. King was the youngest recipient of Nobel Peace Prize and a great orator who moved the hearts of mountains with his eloquent speech" I have a Dream" Dr. King said that "The way of violence leads to bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers, but, the way of non violence leads to redemption and the creation of the beloved community." Sabrina Kaur Mangat said, "Martin Luther King opened so many doors for all of us. The Interfaith service exemplified the principles that he advocated. People of every race, religion and gender joined together to celebrate a wonderful, inspirational and strong minded man who used non-violence to make his voice be heard." She added, that "I as a Sikh relate very well to Dr. King's philosophy as the principles he stood up for are the cornerstones of Sikhism such as freedom, equality, and justice.

*Gurmat School:* GGSF is a Gurdwara that is a Spiritual Center, an institution with a vision to create world wide awareness regarding Sikhs and Sikhism. Since its very inception in 1985, GGSF's mission has been to enhance the image of Sikhs thru every possible channel and bring them into the mainstream. It has provided the representation to the Sikh community in various platforms in myriad ways. It has consistently worked to create awareness among Americans at large regarding Sikhs and Sikhism. GGSF also focuses on service oriented projects on behalf of Sikhs to implement the Sikh concept of Sewa (voluntary service). GGSF has been invited, time and again, to the White House and other governmental agencies, regarding the issues concerning the Sikhs in America. Its leadership was the first ever Sikh representation to be invited to the White House in 1993.

*Gatka: Thousands of Americans welcome Sikhs at the US Independence Day parade in Washington:* Washington - 60 Sikh men, women and children performing Gatka - Sikh martial art performance-enthralled the spectators at the US Independence Day parade. Young Sikhs, mostly born and brought up in America, took the center stage in the national festivities marking America's Independence on the streets stretching from Capitol to the White House. Swelling crowd of 300,000 spectators hailed the Sikh group with loud clapping and approving 'ye' sound as the group passed through the parade.

Gursharan Singh, leader of the Miri Piri Gatka Group said, "This was a great chance to show that Sikhs are part of the mainstream America and that we are equally joyous in the July 4th celebrations. This provided an opportunity for our youngsters to feel pride in being Sikh Americans." Amrit Kaur, Secretary of GGSF, said, "Sikh men and women walking

alongside American bands and floats celebrated not only the 4th of July but also displayed their distinct identity that drew hostility after the events of 9/11. This is our way of asserting that we are Americans and we will continue to educate others about ourselves.”

Source: <http://www.ggsfusa.com/article.aspx?aid=5>

Title: ***Gobind Sadan***

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Description: Gobind Sadan is a place of pilgrimage for all people. Rooted in the Sikh tradition and the universal teachings of its Gurus, Gobind Sadan, "God's House Without Walls," is an international interfaith community currently with centers in India, and in the U.S., which has grown out of Baba Virsa Singh ji's vision for world peace. Babaji teaches the universal messages of all prophets and transforms people through love, faith, meditation and service. He does not seek any charity or followers. Gobind Sadan is staffed by volunteers. The farm income is used to uplift the materially and spiritually poor.

Gobind Sadan Institute for Advanced Studies in Comparative Religions: The Gobind Sadan Institute for Advanced Studies in Comparative Religions was founded in 1990 by His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh ji with the help of several eminent scholars. The Institute's purpose is "the diffusion of knowledge of various religions with particular reference to common principles underlying different faiths as they promote universal brotherhood, peace, amity, and respect for human rights." From the outset, its research has focused on critical areas of theology and religious history often neglected by the mainstream. Being "housed" at Gobind Sadan, the Institute provides scholars and students an experiential basis for their work. This offers a clear mandate to recognize the presence of the "spiritual" or the "mystery" in shaping our traditions, rather than simply reducing religion to a social science.

Blessed are the Peacemakers: The Spiritual Approach to Peace (February 2005). As part of Gobind Sadan Institute's series on "Emerging Trends in World Peace," this seminar brings together government and religious leaders, reconciliation specialists, and social and spiritual workers from all religions and many parts of the globe to jointly consider how spiritual approaches bring peace in situations of conflict. According to Babaji, the path to peace involves: Heals peoples' minds, bodies, and souls to bring peace within; overcomes religious, ethnic, and personal

conflicts; overcomes poverty, turning wasteland into productive farms to alleviate suffering.

"A Lotus on the Water" Baba Virsa Singh Speaks in Russia: Moscow, 18 May, 2004: "I am like a lotus flower on water—I have not come to disturb the water," said His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh during a press conference in Moscow. "But my firm faith is that God is One." The revered Indian spiritual leader of Gobind Sadan, whose centre is in New Delhi, is currently visiting the Moscow area on the invitation of the International Association for Peace through Culture. He was met at the airport by a large crowd who offered the traditional Russian greeting with flowers, salt and bread, and entertained Babaji with joyous singing and dancing. Since his arrival he has given deep consideration to the problems facing Russia, and also reflecting on its very great spiritual future, as he sees in his vision.

Global Peace Initiative of Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders: Geneva, October 6-10, 2002: His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh's addressed the Global Peace Initiative of Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders by stating that 'Nothing Good Comes from War.' War does not discriminate. It kills good people, peace-loving people, as well as those who are evil. All our prophets have stressed peace. Spiritual approach to ending terrorism We cannot reply to terrorism with terrorism. Terrorism will only spread. Paul attacked Jesus's followers. When Jesus appeared to him in vision, he became a great saint and spread Jesus's message. Similarly, Umar came to cut off the head of the Prophet Muhammad, but when he encountered the Prophet's radiant gaze and listened to him, he became his devoted servant and ultimately his caliph. Hazrat Ali said that when one becomes angry, he is no longer carrying on the jihad of Allah. The Prophet Muhammad never said to kill innocent people. He was so merciful that when he returned to Mecca, he called for those who had earlier stoned him and ordered that they should be given the most valuable horses. He explained that they were his real friends, for they tested him in seeing how much he loved God.

Overcoming Religious Conflict: His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh's Challenge to Religious Leaders: We are responsible for the war and conflict if we don't teach our people peace. If you want peace on your borders first break down the barriers to peace among your religions and awaken peace within. Create a climate mutual love and respect. Celebrate each other's holidays. Share each other's scriptures. As long as they maintain that theirs is the only way, their prophet is the only one and their scripture the only teachings of God how can they bring about peace?" Baba ji says. My message is that all prophets have come from one Place. There is one God, and they have all brought His message. Solve these issues and peace will come: First overcome your feeling that 'My prophet is greater than your prophet.' Then end border conflicts. The leaders are not able to find the source of ills of the world. The disease lies in the

current state of religion itself. Religion means love, love and service. It is said, 'Love your neighbor.' Border states are also your neighbors.

Source: <http://www.gobindsadan.org/religious.shtml>

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Description: The Sardarni Kuljit Bindra Chair in Sikh Studies is endowed by Mr. Ishar Singh Bindra and family in honor of Mr. Bindra's wife and family matriarch, Sardarni Kuljit Kaur Bindra. The Chair is established to promote the academic study of Sikh religion, culture and history. The endowment will support the appointment of a faculty member in Sikh Studies, build the University Library's holdings in Sikhism, provide scholarship assistance to students interested in Sikh religion and culture, and fund annual conferences and lectures directed toward the academic community as well as the general public.

Sikhism and Inter-Religious Dialogue: Sikhism and Inter-Religious Dialogue was organized by the Nadir Dinshaw Chair in Inter-Religious Relations & Dr. Jagbir Jhutti-Johal, Lecturer in Sikh Studies, Department of Theology University of Birmingham (UK) & Sardarni Kuljit Kaur Bindra Chair in Sikh Studies Department of Philosophy & Religious Studies Hofstra University, in October 2003. This conference will examine the relationship between contemporary Sikh self-representation and the demands for developing inter-religious relations. At the same time it will explore new mechanisms and pathways for generating more sustainable forms of inter-religious relations. The organizers seek proposals on the following themes: Contemporary and historical framing of Sikh responses to religious pluralism in India and the diaspora; Building inter-religious relations within the framework of multiculturalism; The role of education in fostering inter-religious understanding; the impact of the media on inter-religious relations; The interface between religion and politics; the role of spiritual and political leadership today; State of Sikh/inter-religious dialogue around the world.

Sikh and Punjabi Film Festival: "Saturday, September 18: Following the success of the Toronto-based Sikh and Punjabi film festival "Sisters of the Spinning Wheel," Hofstra's Bindra Chair in Sikh Studies is pleased to announce the launch of the first Sikh Film Festival in New York. The festival will screen movies and documentaries about Sikhs and Sikhism. There will also be opportunities to meet with some of the

filmmakers in small discussion groups,” reports the Hofstra Sikh Studies Bulletin (April 2004)

Remembering and Forgetting: Memory and Trauma in Recent Sikh and Punjabi Experience: “Saturday and Sunday, May 8 and 9, 2004: Remembering and Forgetting: Memory and Trauma in Recent Sikh and Punjabi Experience is an international conference that will examine the importance of memory and trauma in recent Sikh and Punjabi experience. Focusing on the three main events that underpin the psychological disembodiment of the Sikh and Punjabi self – partition (1984), insurgency and migration (post-1984) – this conference will specifically address the central role that trauma and victimization play in the politics of memory,” according to the Hofstra Sikh Studies Bulletin (April 2004).

Sikhism and Critical Theory: Workshop Conference at Hofstra University For two full days - Friday 13th and Saturday 14th of September 2002 - Hofstra University hosted a major workshop-conference entitled “Sikhism and Critical Theory”. This event was organized by Dr. Arvindpal Singh Mandair, holder of the Sardarni Kuljeet Kaur Bindra Endowed Chair in Sikh studies. “Sikhism and Critical Theory” was a great success on many accounts. The conference was attended by scholars, students and researchers within and outside the field of Sikh studies, as well as by members of the American Sikh community who came to attend this event from as far away as California, Canada and the United Kingdom. Before the conference relatively few people will have had any real idea of what “Critical Theory” is, let alone its relationship to Sikhism and Sikh studies. By the end of the two days’ proceedings, however, most people attending the conference had witnessed the beginnings of a new domain in the study of Sikhism, one that is generated from the unavoidable encounter between Sikhism and Critical Theory.

Second Annual New York Spinning Wheel Film Festival: A Celebration of Sikh Films: Stories build communities, and become part of their legacy through the ages. Stories come in different forms, and different are the ways we enjoy and share them. The Spinning Wheel Film Festival celebrates the stories of Sikhs worldwide, and brings diverse interpretations of their traditions and their 500 year history to the screen. The Spinning Wheel Film Festival will present films by, about, and for Sikhs and the wider public. Taking place at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York (about 30 miles east of New York City), the festival will bring together filmmakers from across the globe to discuss their work and screen films ranging from documentaries to major feature films that touch on the Sikh experience.

Source: [http://www.hofstra.edu/Academics/HCLAS/SIKH/index\\_sikh.cfm](http://www.hofstra.edu/Academics/HCLAS/SIKH/index_sikh.cfm)

Title: ***Individual Participation***

Address: Calcutta, India

Description: Saran Singh, Editor of The Sikh Review, writes: Calcutta is a mega city teeming with contradictions. Skirting its southwestern parameters is the holy river Ganges, murky with effluent spewed by scores of industries crowding both its banks. But water is, according to Guru Nanak, (1469-1539) the elemental purifier and sustainer of life on earth, as symbolized by the lotus in a pond.

Not far from where Guru Nanak had camped on the river bank, in closing years of 15th century during his travel to Bengal and Assam, is Belur Math, or monastery seat of the Ramakrishna religious order set up by Swami Vivekananda, illustrious disciple of Ramakrishna – the ultimate mystic (1834-86).

Vivekananda's great journey to America began from Bombay on May 31, 1893 eastward, through Singapore, Yokohama and Vancouver, from where he is believed to have taken a train to Chicago. Monday, Sept 11 1983 witnessed the inaugural session of Parliament of Religions, chaired by Cardinal Gibbons. The Indian Monks cherubic face and towering frane, clad in 'gorgeous appeal' with a great yellow turban, only heightened the fervour, as he rose – as the last speaker at inauguration – to say: 'Sister and brothers of America;' He was greeted with a standing ovations. The rest is history. The sage passed away at age 39 on July 04, 1902.

I had the humbling experience, in 1993, to join the Centenary celebration of Vivekananda's Chicago address at Dakshineswar. Having made Calcutta my home in 1984, shortly after retirement, it was impossible for me not to be drawn irresistibly to the inter-faith gatherings, whether held at Mother Teresa's Home. The RK Mission Institute of Culture, or with Fr. George Pattery at Xavier Sadan.

Fortunately, I had known Mother Teresa since 197 when she came to be associated with National Board for Child Welfare, set up by prime minister Morarji Desai, in the ministry of social welfare the veteran nationalist, Dr Pratap Chandra Chunder was the minister in charge, and I was the Secretary to government of India. The Mother was a radiant and inspirational person who transcended religion in the conventional sense. IN 1984 when Indian army stormed the holy precincts of Amritsar, not only Pope John Paul II, in distant Vatican, spoke words of sympathy for the Sikhs, but Mother Teresa - when approached by me in a delegation – commiserated, and counseled prayer meetings.

In the months of August-Sept 1993 I was invited to participate in the Parliament of World's Religions in Chicago, in my capacity as editor of THE SIKH REVIEW, a Theological journal wedded to inter-faith understanding (now in 55th year of publication, with a global presence). The 1993 Parliament, inaugurated by H.H. The Dalai Lama, was characterized by informality, fellowship and vigorous – even exuberant-sessions, where, e.g. the gentle Sufi Pir Inayat Khan made a deeper



impression than the rambunctious ‘Nation of Islam’ leader, Farah Khan – with his armed security guard. Fr Albert Nambiarpi from Kerala, India, becomes a friend, and Dr Karan Singh, the philosopher – prince and his charming wife enhanced India’s reputation as a pluralist and tolerant nation.

For a work-a-day Sikh from India, the 1993 Parliament was a learning experience. I even made a presentation on the highly venerated Guru Granth Sahib, with the focus on the universality of its message that transcends time and space, in the quest for discovery of cardinal truths within human beings. Reflecting on the text one is drawn closer to the awareness of God’s presence. How does the Guru Granth deal with questions of faith and reason? Divinely endowed wisdom is a tool for self-discovery and self-realisation that INVISIBLY links us with God’s creative power, and progressively enables us to accept God’s will, which is indeed the pervasive-if incomprehensible-Reality.

Come 2004, I was pleasantly surprised to receive an invitation from the Council, endorsed by my friend Professor Balwant Singh Hansra, to attend the Parliament once again, this time at Barcelona, Spain. The colourful – if crowded-opening session was addressed by Shirin Ebadi, the Nobel Laureate from Iran. Since 1893, and after 1993, The context had changed, and the world faced a challenge of frenzied individuals using religion as a pretext for senseless violence. The Parliament, nevertheless, became a microcosm of universal goodwill, as scholars and saints expounded God’s love and unity of human race. The 9/11 violence and its aftermath were horrendous aberrations. The power of God shone radiantly in diverse ways: ranging from Shinto drumbeats, to Native Americans’ rhythmic invocation of Nature, in its myriad moods, and in Sikhism’s inimitable community ‘Langar,’ every day, under aegis of Guru Nanak Nishkam Jatha of Birmingham (England) events that followed a three-day Retreat at Montserrat, the Benedictine Monastery. This was a triumph of inter-faith concordance.

Source: Provided by Saran Singh, Retired Indian Admin. Service (Hon.); Editor, The Sikh Review, A Theological, Educational and Social-Cultural Monthly, Pledged to Inter-Religious Amity.

Title: ***The Sikh Next Door***  
Address: The Sikh Next Door Project  
1185 Marsh Road  
Redwood City, CA 94063  
USA  
Contact: [info@sikhnextdoor.org](mailto:info@sikhnextdoor.org).  
(888) 718-8214  
Web: <http://www.sikhnet.com>

**Description:** The Sikh Next Door is a fun and engaging educational project that introduces 6th through 12th graders to Sikhs, helping dispel the myths behind the turban and beard. The package includes a 15-minute video, comprehensive lesson plans, and a website with additional resources and activities. The Sikh Next Door curriculum was designed by a team of educators and is aligned to national curriculum standards. As a result of the increased American fear of those who "look like terrorists" after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, many Sikh children are bullied and harassed at school. One very clear problem is that schools and libraries currently lack high-quality, professionally produced materials to introduce Sikhs, their unique identity and their practices to American students. One of the most powerful ways to reach America's young people is through exciting and engaging video projects that can be incorporated directly into their existing school curriculum. The Sikh Next Door is a fun and entertaining video designed to introduce 6th through 12th graders to Sikhs.... A teacher's guide with complementary lesson plans and activities accompanies the 15-minute video.

**For Students:** The Sikh Next Door is a fun and entertaining video designed to introduce 6th through 12th graders to Sikhs. Produced in a quick-paced, broadcast television style and told through the voices of four Sikh youth, this short film is a video resource that demonstrates the bicultural lives of Sikh Americans and engages students in a discussion about multiculturalism. In the process, it communicates effectively why students should not discriminate against others based solely on their external appearance. A teacher's guide with complementary lesson plans and activities accompanies the 15-minute video. The materials are aligned to national educational standards. These classroom exercises focus on living in a multicultural society, and require minimal planning and background knowledge for presenters and teachers. Upper grade levels have the opportunity to use the video for more detailed discussions about world religions.

**Sikhs by the Numbers:** Here are just a few figures you might not know about Sikhs. Over 22 million Sikhs worldwide. Fifth largest organized religion in the world. 20 million Sikhs in India 500,000 Sikhs in the U.S. Less than 2% of the population of India. 3% of the population of Canada. 1469 birth of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. 1912 first Sikh gurdwara built in the U.S. in Stockton, California. 1956 Dalip Singh Saund, a Sikh, becomes first Asian American elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Equal rights for men and women in all religious affairs. Belief in one God for whole of Universe. 1430 pages, length of Sikh Holy Book, Guru Granth Sahib.

**Learn More About Sikhs:** Sikh values: Equality: Sikhs believe that all people are equal – no matter what your gender or skin color is, or how much money you have, or what you believe, or where you were born. Pluralism: Sikhs believe in pluralism – respecting diversity and other

religious beliefs. Social Responsibility: Sikhs believe in social responsibility through honest and truthful living. What does this mean? Whether you're at your school or temple or home, you must do honest and hard work, called kirat karni. If you earn money or other things, you must share with others, called vand chakna. And most importantly, you must try to do [seva](#), or serve your community every way you can. Sikh in America: Sikh values are very similar to American ideals: equality, freedom, and pluralism. America was founded as a place that promised freedom and opportunity for all people. Sikhs too believe that all people should be treated equally. America is a single nation made up of many different kinds of people and cultures, like a gigantic mosaic where each colorful piece is essential for total brilliance. Sikhs make up one piece of that mosaic, different from all the rest, yet they fit into and complete the entire picture. There are many different kinds of Sikhs. Sikhs in America have all types of professions: from doctors to lawyers to teachers to cab drivers to store owners. Some Sikhs do not trace their roots to Punjab. For example, thousands of non-Punjabis born in America have chosen to convert to Sikhism. Through preserving their identities, Sikhs bring new color to the American landscape just as they share American traditions with their neighbors.

For Teachers: Curriculum Overview: a) Curriculum Overview: The Sikh Next Door Project curriculum was designed by educators for teachers to introduce the challenging topic of diversity. The Project celebrates diversity by introducing students to four Sikh American youth who take them on a tour of their bi-cultural lives. Middle school teachers can use the exercises to explore living in a multicultural society, while teaching geography and language arts. High school teachers can also use the video to explore world religions and culture, while addressing behavioral studies and civics. This short film and accompanying lesson plans encourage all students to think about their own diverse communities and unique personal identity. b) *Sample Curriculum*: The Sikh Next Door Project arrives in a package that includes two things: a 15-minute DVD (VHS available upon request) and a binder with a glossy 60-page teacher's guide with lesson plans and activities aligned to national standards. Curriculum exercises require minimal planning and background knowledge for teachers and can be easily adapted to a teacher's specific classroom needs.

Source: <http://www.sikhnextdoor.org/teachers/sample.html>

Title: ***Gurdwara Sangat Sahib***  
Address: Gurdwara Sangat Sahib Förening  
Dymmelkärrsv. 23 14650 Tullinge  
Stockholm, Sweden  
Contact: [unga@sikh.se](mailto:unga@sikh.se)

(+46) 8-778-1414

Web: <http://sikh.se>

Description: Gurdwara Sangat Sahib, (Stockholm, Sweden) and Swedish Organisation of Sikh Students (SOSS) was founded in 2004. The youth organisation consists of Sikh students (mainly) settled in Stockholm, who regularly get together and spend time together with various activities. Among other activities, SOSS has collected money in money-boxes on behalf of the Swedish Red Cross, in relation to the Tsunami victims, and the victims Pakistan earthquake, and has engaged in other charity related activities. Other times there have been physical activities (sports, and other leisure activities), discussions have been held related to, our society/organization, and the society as a whole. The organization was founded in December 2004, and is gradually growing. SOSS is a non-profit and politically neutral organization. Gurdwara Sangat Sahib is the oldest Gurdwara in Sweden, and the new Gurdwara building was opened 1995. The Gurdwara is a meeting place for religious activities, and everybody is welcome, keeping in mind the following rules of the Gurdwara, which must be followed by all.

Title: ***World Sikh Organization***

Address: 1183 Cecil Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1H 7Z6 Canada

Contact: [wsopanth@gmail.com](mailto:wsopanth@gmail.com)  
(613) 521 1984

Web: <http://www.worldsikh.org>

Description: The World Sikh Organization (WSO) of Canada was registered with the Government of Canada as a non-profit organization, under the name World Sikh Organization of Canada, and has the following primary national objectives: to foster understanding and good will towards all nations, creeds, persuasions and faiths; to act as a representative body and spokes-body of the Sikhs of Canada and help resolve differences amongst members and member organizations; to liaise with government and non-government agencies and to apprise them of the interests of the Sikhs; to encourage, develop and maintain close relationships with similar and like-minded organizations throughout Canada; to do all such things not inconsistent with the doctrines and ethics of Sikhism and the law of the land as are conducive to the attainment of the objectives of the World Sikh Organization of Canada.

*Social and Interfaith Activity:* The WSO has been actively involved in addressing major social issues in Canada since 1984. As part of this involvement, and with the view to fostering better understanding and accommodation of all peoples, the WSO has: prepared submissions to

governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations; presented at and hosted conferences with and for community groups, police boards, politicians, inter-faith organizations, schools, universities, and various other non-profit entities; conducted training and educational workshops in communities throughout Canada. The WSO has been instrumental in the acceptance of the Sikh Religious Articles of Faith in many parts of the world

*Legal, Constitutional, Human Rights Activity:* The WSO has been invited to make submissions, presentations, and act in a consultative capacity to national and international government and legislative committees, tribunals, and non-governmental entities, on constitutional and human rights issues, as well as other matters. For example, the WSO has done the following: Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council; Presentation to the World Conference Against Racism; Consultations with the Refugee Review Tribunals of Australia, United States and the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board; Presentation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, on Bill C-36, Canada's Anti-Terrorism Legislation; Presentations to Canadian Senate and House Committees on Bills C-16/C-18 (Citizenship and Immigration); Consultations and Submissions to the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs on issues of foreign policy, including Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties; Consultations with the Canadian Department of Employment and Immigration on immigration policy development; Consultations with the Ministry of Multiculturalism; and Consultations with Committee reviewing Canada Customs and Revenue/Solicitor General policies on non-for profit and charitable status for cultural organizations.

*Education and Awareness about Sikh Religion and Culture:* Sikhism is a religion that believes in One God and in the equality of all regardless of caste, colour, religion or gender. Part of the WSO's mission is to generate awareness of Sikh culture in the international arena. At the same time, the WSO provides an enormous base of information and assistance on issues relating to Sikhs. Some of the WSO's ongoing work includes: distribution of information regarding the Sikh religion; sponsoring intercultural banquets and hosting seminars, workshops, and public discussions on issues of national and international interest; providing educational services, multicultural consultations, training programs, translation services, and other resource assistance to parliamentarians, the media, and the community.

*Selected Canadian Jurisprudence:* a) [Multani v. Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys, 2006 SCC 6 \(CanLII\)](#) Supreme Court of Canada decision allowing the wearing of kirpans in public schools by Sikh students. The decision was unanimous. The SCC held that there was no evidence that the kirpan posed a safety risk. (WSO participated as Intervenor). b) [Syndicat Northcrest v. Amselem, 2004 SCC 47 \(CanLII\)](#):

Case regarding a condominium restricting the building of succah huts on balconies by Jewish owners. At issue was the appropriate test to be applied when determining the “sincerity of belief”, and whether expert evidence was necessary to establish this belief. The Supreme Court of Canada held that a claimant need not show some sort of objective religious obligation, requirement or precept to invoke freedom of religion (ie. expert evidence was not required to invoke freedom of religion). (WSO participated as Intervenor). c) Peel Board of Education v. Pandori (1991) 3 O.R. (3d) 531 (Div. Ct.); This case upheld the right of Sikh students and teachers to wear kirpans in public school classrooms in Ontario.

Source: [http://www.worldsikh.org/0707/legal\\_links.htm](http://www.worldsikh.org/0707/legal_links.htm)

## **Taoist**

Title: ***Singapore Taoist Federation***

Address: N/A

Singapore

Contact: N/A

Description: “On January 2, 2007 some 2,000 delegates from almost all religious organizations in Singapore gathered for a dinner reception at Singapore Expo Hall. Among those attending were some 60 representatives from the Singapore Soka Association (SSA) led by SSA Chairman Ong Bon Chai. Participants were encouraged to sit with those from different faiths than their own as a way to promote dialogues that would further understanding and friendship. The Ba'alwi Mosque, the Catholic Archdiocese, the Hindu Endowments Board and the Singapore Taoist Federation organized the interfaith event, that was also supported by 21 other organizations including the Inter Religious Organizations (IRO) and SSA. Guest of Honor for the evening was Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

In his speech, Singaporean Prime Minister Lee stated, "To root out the stereotypes and prejudices that form the fault lines in a multi-religious society, it is crucial to have a process of dialogue and engagement. Such dialogue is not aimed at achieving agreement, but at building a relationship." He further added, "In a troubled world, we have made ourselves an oasis where we can live in peace and harmony together. What we have achieved, very few others have done. We must treasure this and do our best to keep it this way. Every religious group will be protected and assured of fair treatment, but no group should press its claims too hard to the exclusion of others. This is the accommodation that we have come to accept in Singapore."

Part of the event's proceedings included 10 religious leaders standing together on the stage and offering a joint prayer. The event was

preceded by a program launched in 2006 that brought together leaders from different religious groups. Some 20 SSA men and young men supported the January 2 event as ushers.

Source: <http://www.sgi.org/do/interfaith/faith2007/faith070102.html>)

Title: ***Living Tao Foundation***

Address: N/A

Contact: [info@livingtao.org](mailto:info@livingtao.org)

Web: <http://www.livingtao.org/index.htm>

Description: Living Tao Foundation was founded in 1976 and maintains a home office in the United States, providing seminars, workshops and training programs for our members and interest groups throughout the world. We are a non-profit educational network of friends who share the belief that harmony and potential are found intrinsically in the natural universe and within the body itself, waiting to be kindled through creative awareness and supportive human relationships. We observe a manifold spectrum of inspiration, using the infinite wisdom of nature, our predecessors, our fellow students, and most importantly, our own inner resources. At the heart of the foundation is each individual, coming together to share our lives-in-progress, and reaching out to foster and protect our global legacy.

Living Tao Foundation has participated in Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions events in Chicago, Cape Town, and Barcelona.

Source: Provided by Chungliang Al Huang and  
<http://www.livingtao.org/source/about-us.htm>

## **Zoroastrian**

Title: ***Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America***

Address: 5750 South Jackson Street  
Hinsdale, IL 60521



- Phone: 813.484.8333  
Web: [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org)  
Description: FEZANA is a non-profit religious group registered in the state of Illinois and formed to function as the coordinating organization for Zoroastrian Associations of North America.  
Interfaith Activities:  
1. Interfaith Environmental Programs  
Conference to review scientific evidence on climate change, including its consequences on indigenous peoples, water security, land use and the politics of energy.  
NEW YORK, Aug. 27, 2007 - FEZANA, the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, today announced a contingent of Zoroastrian community and interfaith leaders from New Jersey, Pittsburgh and as far as Mumbai, India, will attend and address the 60th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference on Climate Change Sept. 5-7.  
Source: [http://www.fezana.org/Fezana\\_UN\\_Climate\\_Change.pdf](http://www.fezana.org/Fezana_UN_Climate_Change.pdf)  
2. Membership in international interfaith organizations  
“RELIGIONS FOR PEACE (RFP/WCRP): Jehangir Sarosh of UK serves as Moderator for Religions for Peace – Europe; Homi Gandhi has been recently appointed to serve on RFP-USA, based in New York. On behalf of FEZANA, Rohinton Rivetna, has participated for the last several years. In November 2005, Roxanna Mirza represented FEZANA’s UN/NGO team at WCRP’s  
Religious Youth Leaders summit in New York: In January 2006, Rohinton participated as a FEZANA delegate at the National Gathering of Religious Leaders in Chicago. One of our Youth leaders, Roxanna Mirza may participate in the VIII World Assembly in Kyoto, Japan in August 2006.  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR COMMUNITY AND JUSTICE (NCCJ): We continue to provide material for the Zarathushti page of the NCCJ Interfaith Calendar, of which thousands of copies are sold/distributed worldwide. We participate in a similar Canadian Interfaith calendar through the Edmonton Interfaith  
Center for Education and Action, where I have served as their past vice-chair of the Board.”  
Source: <http://www.fezana.org/ICGCoop.pdf>  
  
Title: ***World Zoroastrian Organization***  
Address: 135 Tennison Road  
South Norwood  
London SE25 5NF  
Web: <http://www.w-z-o.org/>  
Description: Supported by a membership of many Zarthushti associations and individuals from all corners of the globe, and the munificence of several



donors and foundations, WZO continues to take myriad progressive actions to shape the present and the future of Zarthushtis everywhere, including: represent and protect Zarthushti rights and interests internationally; foster unity among Zarthushtis of differing ethnic origins & traditions; encourage better education, entrepreneurship & leadership in its youth; sustain religious infrastructure, traditions and priesthood; alleviate poverty & succour the community's needy, the sick and the old; enhance better understanding of the faith, its history, traditions culture among Zarthushtis and other communities among whom they live. Interfaith Activities: Participation in interfaith educational events and publications: "In the last year our Interfaith representative Ms Shahin Bekhradnia has been called upon to speak about Zoroastrianism on a number of occasions and she has also contributed articles to a variety of publications. Such occasions include talks to Sixth Form students, the community at the Abbey at Sutton Courtenay, the Donnington Interfaith group at Elmore, Commonwealth Day at Oxford Town Hall and others."

Source: [www.w-z-o.org/test/annual-report2.htm](http://www.w-z-o.org/test/annual-report2.htm)

Title: ***Zoroastrian Interfaith Group***

Address: Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York  
106 Pomona Road  
Suffern, NY 10901

Phone: 201-569-7359

Web: [www.zagny.org](http://www.zagny.org)

Description: Interfaith Education: "EVENING OF LEARNING AND SHARING BLENDING CULTURES AND COMMUNITY: Zoroastrian Interfaith Group (ZIG) of ZAGNY sponsored an evening of electrifying, thought-provoking and heart-warming speeches and discussion.

Source: [http://www.zagny.org/newsletters/ZAGNY\\_Newsletter\\_0512.pdf](http://www.zagny.org/newsletters/ZAGNY_Newsletter_0512.pdf)

Title: ***Zoroastrian College***

Address: Sanjan, India

Phone: 0091-22-22660214 /22662950

Web: <http://www.indiayellowpages.com/zoroastrian/>

Description: "Its purpose is to enable souls to evolve spiritually in the quality, purity and speed of White Light. Its main educational purpose is to spread the knowledge of the ANCIENT COSMIC WISDOM. By gaining an awareness and understanding of the DIVINE UNIVERSAL NATURAL LAWS of the Almighty Creator of the Universe, every soul is enabled to exercise its free will correctly. By choosing to obey the Divine Laws, the Will of God, by choosing to help the Almighty in carrying out His Divine Plan of Spiritual Evolution of the Universe, every person can

himself/herself evolve spiritually; and attain the ultimate aim of BECOMING ONE WITH THE DIVINE CREATOR.”

Interfaith Activities:

1. Interfaith Peace Studies Department

“This Dept. functions in Collaboration with several Global Organisations...”

INTERFAITH PEACE EDUCATION is promoted through this Department worldwide. People are encouraged to do Research and present original Thesis with suggestions to solve problems and bring peace to the World.”

2. Interfaith Events: “Through this department the College organises INTERNATIONAL & NATIONAL CONFERENCES to promote PEACE THROUGH INTERFAITH DIALOGUE. Conferences organised by other associations are also attended by the College Representatives. Since 1975 conferences held in Israel, Canada, USA, Belgium, Italy, Taiwan, Kazakstan, Iran and other countries as well as within India have had very good results in promoting Peace. In 1993 Zoroastrian College had co-organised World Religions Peace Conferences in India and participated in Conferences abroad, in conjunction with the World Parliament of Religions, International Association of Educators for World Peace; World Federation of Inter-Religious Councils and other Organisations.”

3. Interfaith Peace Programs: “In 1990, 1992 and 1993 Zoroastrian College participated in the major world Religions Conferences organised by the ST. EGIDIO COMMUNITY in Italy/Europe with support from the Vatican; which eventually led to the Peace proposal of establishing Headquarters for all the three major religions, Jewish, Christian and Islam in Jerusalem.”

4. Interfaith Political Projects: “In the year 1989 the one and only Zoroastrian College in the World accomplished a PIECE OF PRIVATE DIPLOMACY in the interests of education internationally. MADAME BENAZIR BHUTTO was the first Muslim woman to achieve being elected Prime Minister of Pakistan. To felicitate her for this achievement, Zoroastrian College was the first to confer an Honorary Doctorate Degree on her. At that time in Pakistan, the Muslim majority community school children”



## Essays

### The Interfaith Movement: An Incomplete Assessment

By Kusumita P. Pedersen

#### PRECIS

This essay presents a report on the current state of the interfaith movement, a variety of organized efforts throughout the world to create better understanding and cooperation between and among the world's religious communities. It is sub-titled "an incomplete assessment," since there is little systematically compiled data in this area. It gives both a level-by-level survey and a geographical summary and then analyzes important issues arising in interfaith programs. These issues include the goal of one global organization, the question of what it means to "represent" a religion, the inclusion-exclusion problem (including participation of new religious movements), the role of Christians in organizational life, the possibility of an "Abrahamic exclusivism," and the search for "spirituality," both as distinct from "religion" and across religious boundaries.

#### *I. Introduction*

This article aims to do two things. First, it presents a brief survey of interfaith work worldwide, as a sketch for a more detailed and complete inventory of the extent and types of activity now being carried on. Second, it offers an analysis of some of the most critical issues at present in the interfaith field. What follows is not one more theological statement on the relation of religions or a reflection on why interfaith understanding and cooperation are needed but, rather, a descriptive report followed by evaluative comments. As this is a large agenda, this account is a preliminary one.

The interfaith movement is growing rapidly. New expansion was already occurring before September 11, 2001, but the terrorist attacks of that day and ensuing events have greatly intensified awareness of the necessity to work toward better relations between religious communities. While the nature and goals of ongoing interfaith work have not in themselves changed, many have grasped in a new way what the stakes are in this undertaking and the price to be paid if it fails. Others have had dramatically confirmed their already existing conviction of its importance. The pace of interfaith activity seems to be accelerating. This is happening not only because of greater appreciation that it is needed, but also because those wishing to develop interfaith programs now have much precedent and know-how on which to draw. Over a century of interfaith activity has provided a reservoir of established methods, well-known organizational patterns, and acquaintance with the issues. The maturing of the movement and the course of events have intersected. As interfaith work today seems ready to become more mainstream than at any previous time, an assessment may be useful.

#### A. Motives for Interfaith Work

One may distinguish three main motives for interfaith work, which influence the creation of different kinds of programs: (1) to live together harmoniously, mitigate tensions, and resolve conflict; (2) to engage a "common task"; and (3) to search for truth

and understanding in the context of religious plurality. These motives are not mutually exclusive and in practice are often found together. An outline of them will serve as a frame of reference for the descriptions to follow, as will a brief consideration of terminology.

The first motive is most familiar. Interfaith workers very often say that the purpose of what they do is to enable better relations among religious groups at all levels, from knowing one's neighbors in the local community to reducing violence such as hate crimes or acts of terrorism, even to ending civil or international armed conflict and achieving post-conflict reconciliation. The operating premise is that direct personal encounter, more accurate knowledge of the other, and an exchange of views, stories, and experiences can lessen tensions, dispel misunderstanding, and build trust. As Diana Eck has put it, "Being judged as a group, not as an individual, erases the human face and is the first step toward dehumanization that gives rise to hate crimes."<sup>1</sup> Conversely, the face-to-face meeting of unique individuals from different groups is a step in the opposite direction toward amicable relations. It is not naively supposed that mere contact will lead to better attitudes but that interaction organized according to certain requirements is needed. Research in social psychology supports testimony from the interfaith arena that, under specific conditions, face-to-face encounter can dispel stereotypes and foster harmony.<sup>2</sup>

It must be remembered, however, that much as religious divisions are a source of tensions, they are not the only fault lines along which conflicts occur. Factors other than religious ones may cause or contribute to conflict, and there is thus a significant overlap of the aims and methods of interfaith work as such and other work also concerned with inter-ethnic, "inter-group," and inter-cultural relations, as well as various kinds of peacemaking, conflict resolution, and the reconciliation of groups with a history of violence.<sup>3</sup>

The second motive for interfaith work is recognition of a need to work in partnership for a common purpose. Since the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, the idea has been advanced that the religions of the world should join together to promote the common good. As early as the attempt to establish the League of Nations, from 1920 to 1946, and continuing with the founding of the United Nations in 1945, both leaders in different fields and ordinary people have believed that an assembly of religions corresponding to the world body of states should exist. Today, religious leaders and

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<sup>1</sup>Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2001), pp. 303–304.

<sup>2</sup>The conditions for successful intercultural contact identified by Richard W. Breslin are the presence of a "superordinate goal" (here called a common task), stereotype-breaking contact, equal-status contact, intimate contact in the sense of communication that discloses the uniqueness of individuals and their lives, and the expertise of facilitators (Richard W. Breslin, "Intercultural Contact and Communication," in Leonore Loeb Adler, Florence L. Denmark, and Uwe P. Gielen, eds., *Cross-Cultural Topics in Psychology*, 2nd ed. [Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001], pp. 213–227). Also see Yehuda Amir, "Contact Hypothesis in Ethnic Relations," *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 71 (1969), pp. 319–342. Guidelines for dialogue are part of the method of interfaith programs. See, as examples, *Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1979); Leonard Swidler, "The Dialogue Decalogue," *J.E.S.* 20 (Winter, 1983): 1–4 (widely reprinted); C.B.C.I. Commission for Dialogue and Ecumenism, *Guidelines for Inter-Religious Dialogue*, 2nd rev. ed. (New Delhi: C.B.C.I. Centre, 1989); National Conference for Community and Justice, *Communication Guidelines and Ground Rules for Useful Dialogue/Rights, Risks, and Responsibilities of Dialogue* (New York: an internal document of the N.C.C.J., 2000); and Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom, *Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs* (London: Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom, n.d.).

<sup>3</sup>For useful studies in this area, see David R. Smock, ed., *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2002). See also the same author's *Faith-Based NGOs and International Peacebuilding*, United States Institute of Peace Special Report 76 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2001).

communities are working together on a wide range of issues, including poverty, human rights, and the environment, as well as war and other forms of violence. International assemblies have been held periodically under different auspices for over a century to consider how all the religions might address all the issues through some form of structured cooperation.<sup>4</sup> Such global meetings can only be consultative, since there is as yet no agency that has the capacity to implement or compel compliance with their resolutions. Meanwhile, cooperation among religious communities at the local, sub-national, and national levels has increased enormously and continues to do so.

Third, religious believers confronted by religious diversity may ask: Is it the same God to whom we pray? Is it the same ultimate reality on which we reflect in philosophy and theology and at times seek to know through contemplation? These questions often arise as a byproduct of work together on a common task, or they present themselves in other life situations. Apart from any instrumental usefulness their answers may have, these questions have a compelling force and urgency for some because of the intrinsic importance of their religious content.

## B. Terminology

Inconsistency persists in the use of the terms “ecumenical” and “interfaith.” “Ecumenical,” which technically refers to relations between and among Christian churches, is very often used on the popular level to mean “interfaith,” that is, interreligious or referring to relations between two or more religions. The term “interfaith” is appearing more and more often in the press and other media. “Interreligious” had previously been more prevalent in academic life, but it is now frequently used in programs bringing together religious representatives, while “interfaith” (simpler and bearing the resonance of the word “faith”) is widely used in religious communities and interfaith groups. In Britain and Canada, “multifaith” is also in common use. This essay will generally employ the term “interfaith.”

There are several reasons why the phrase “interfaith movement” has become current in referring to the totality of interfaith work presently going on in the world. Chief among these is the need to avoid referring to interfaith work by any term that could inaccurately imply a high degree of centralized and/or hierarchical structure with top-down direction. While it is a mistake to imply that interfaith activity is exhaustively contained in the programs of self-described “interfaith organizations,” it is just as misleading to allow any misconception that interfaith work somehow consists mainly of formal cooperation between religious institutions. Some cherish the goal or ideal of a global, inclusive, and officially representative organization of all the world’s religions (discussed below), but this is only one model for interfaith life. While efforts have been made to create such an organization, this goal has yet to be realized.

I use the word “movement” to refer to an activity that can spread horizontally by using particular, known methods, without necessarily depending either on charismatic leaders or on material support or authority from one or a few centers. The thousands of interfaith projects and organizations found all over the world today are not sponsored,

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<sup>4</sup>For a detailed historical account, see Marcus Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope: One Hundred Years of Global Interfaith Dialogue* (New York: Crossroad, 1992).

coordinated, or directed by any single organization or bureaucracy. The overall picture of interfaith work, rather, shows thousands of groups and activities that are loosely related by a cluster of shared methods, aims, and values. Especially when we consider the growth of grassroots local programs, the word “movement” seems accurate and evocative.

In interfaith groups, a number of different words express an embrace of the world as a whole. The word “global” now brings to mind “globalization,” while “world” is the first word in the names of several international interfaith organizations. “International” might suggest, at times erroneously, the cooperation of national groups specifically, but is still often used. “Global,” “world,” and “international” all seem serviceable in discussions of what is now commonly referred to as “the interfaith movement.”

## *II. A Survey of Types of Interfaith Activities at the Local, National, and International Levels*

### **A. The State of the Data**

Even a short global survey of interfaith activity presents considerable challenges. To my knowledge no comprehensive scientific study now exists. The preparation of such a study will require years of research, involve many experts, and will ultimately fill thousands of pages. In some areas at present, documentation of interfaith work is ample and professionally prepared.<sup>5</sup> In others, information is available but is not systematic or complete. In still others, one can do no more than take soundings; the evidence is fragmentary and anecdotal, and one must rely on educated guesses and connection of the dots to arrive at an informal judgment.<sup>6</sup>

At the outset, however, I wish to share one very strong impression, namely, that interfaith work at this time is probably far more extensive than the lists of any published directory or website might indicate.<sup>7</sup> In research, one repeatedly encounters not only new groups and activities but also longstanding organizations or projects that are recorded only in their own publications. I am reasonably certain that, even if one speaks of organizations or agencies proper, there are between two and three thousand in the world today,<sup>8</sup> maybe many more. If one looks at interfaith activities less narrowly defined, I am fairly confident that the number would go into five figures. No one knows for certain just how many people are reached by all of these groups and programs.

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<sup>5</sup>For a rare example of a systematic and comprehensive study, see *Local Inter Faith Activity in the UK: A Survey* (London: Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom, 2003).

<sup>6</sup>Full information on all the interfaith groups and activities encountered in more than twenty years of involvement in interfaith work would turn this account into a directory rather than a journal article. The Appendix includes a brief selected list (for the most part not including local organizations), which may give some indication of the kind of evidence investigated. In addition to the sources listed in the notes herein, interfaith organizations of which the newsletters, reports, other publications and websites have been consulted include, but are not limited to, the appended list.

<sup>7</sup>In spite of this impression, I wish to acknowledge my special debt to the following directories: Daniel L. Anderson, ed., *North America Interfaith Directory* (New York: Temple of Understanding and the North America Interfaith Network, 1990); Marcus Braybrooke, ed., *Interfaith Organizations, 1893–1979: An Historical Directory* (New York and Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1980); Francis Clark, ed., *Interfaith Directory* (New York: International Religious Foundation, 1987); Margo Fish, Peter Laurence, and Nancy Moshé, eds., *Global Interfaith Directory, 1993* (New York: Temple of Understanding, 1993); as well as lists assembled by Joel Beversluis, by the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions in its “Gifts of Service” program, by Interfaith Voices for Peace and Justice ([www.interfaithvoices.org](http://www.interfaithvoices.org)), and by the Pluralism Project ([www.pluralism.org](http://www.pluralism.org)).

<sup>8</sup>One thousand groups for the U.S.A. and Canada alone could be a low estimate. The Pluralism Project lists more than 550 groups, mostly in the U.S.A. See [www.pluralism.org/directory](http://www.pluralism.org/directory).

## B. Criteria

An extremely important principle in conducting any assessment of the extent of interfaith work, either in one area or in its entirety, is that the volume of this work cannot be measured by counting the number of “interfaith organizations.” The term “interfaith organization” implies an independent or free-standing, probably registered or incorporated, and developed organization that is multireligious in both sponsorship and participation and that has interreligious relations as its chief aim.<sup>9</sup> These organizations exist in significant numbers, but they are only one part of interfaith activity.

Interfaith work can take many forms besides a standing interfaith organization such as a city interfaith council, such as those found in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, or an international interfaith conference—to take two obvious examples.<sup>10</sup> Much interfaith activity is conducted by members of religious bodies who collaborate without bringing their activities under the banner of an umbrella organization that is formally constituted as “interfaith.” One may find members of different faiths banding together *ad hoc* to work on a particular concrete issue, such as disaster relief, assistance to immigrants, environmental concerns, or AIDS. The campus ministry of a university or college in the U.S.A. or Canada is usually multireligious, as are chaplaincies in hospitals and prisons. Business corporations concerned about diversity may have internal interfaith programs, as indicated by the Ford Interfaith Network, sponsored by the Ford Motor Company for its employees.<sup>11</sup> Projects exist to train police in interfaith awareness. Interfaith cooperation in health care seems extensive in the U.S.A., but it takes place in a separate sphere from other interfaith activities. Programs are widespread that deal with issues arising in interfaith marriages. Interfaith prayer services are increasingly common and are not always sponsored by interfaith organizations.

I am, therefore, taking as the governing criterion of “interfaith work” for this survey *any organized and ongoing activity that intentionally involves more than one religion*. Limiting the account to activities with a certain kind of institutionalization is prejudicial, in that it will exclude many existing activities and yield a biased and truncated picture.

Turning now to the substance of the survey, I will proceed from the bottom up, looking at types of interfaith activity at the local level, the intermediate or sub-national level, the national level, and the regional and international levels.<sup>12</sup> The reader is asked to bear in mind that only a bare minimum of groups will be identified by name, as referring to more than that would call for the impossible task of deciding which groups are “important enough” to be mentioned and then cataloguing them. The names of a number of groups, however, especially international organizations, can be found in the notes. What is given here is a typology rather than a directory, which would be voluminous.

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<sup>9</sup>E.g., Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, until recently President of the Pontifical Council on Interreligious Dialogue, has stated that the Council is not an “interfaith organization” as such, since it is a Roman Catholic bureau. At the same time, it is a highly organized body that plays a leading role in interfaith activities (Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope*, p. 245).

<sup>10</sup>As an illustration, a consultation of experts I convened in New York on May 11, 2000, on behalf of the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions quickly listed about twenty distinct *kinds* of interfaith activities in the tri-state New York area.

<sup>11</sup>The 2005 report on the Ford Interfaith Network can be found at <http://www.pluralism.org/research/profiles/display.php?profile=74143>.

<sup>12</sup>It should be noted that, with the advent of Internet communication, it is now easier for a group, even the most “local,” to communicate widely, even “globally,” and to extend its scope without travel or physical expansion. The Internet can blur the distinction among “local,” “national,” “regional,” and “global.”



### C. The Local Level

In many cities of the world, interfaith “centers” exist. The type of interfaith activity represented by a center is so typical that we may view it as a classic pattern of interfaith life. It may indeed be an essential element of the method that enables interfaith work to spread horizontally. The activity of a center is simply the meeting of followers of different religions for discussion, exchange of views on subjects of common concern, presentations on their own traditions, and possibly shared prayer. A common format, which seems familiar all over the world, is a roundtable or panel discussion. The smallest scale type of interfaith “center” is a study group, which can even take place in someone’s home. More developed types of centers include programs with conferences and/or cultural events, deliberate involvement of religious leaders and official representatives of the religions, and ceremonial events such as interfaith services. A center may term itself an “institute” if it is devoted to research and publication.

In the U.S.A., Canada, and the United Kingdom an important and characteristic kind of interfaith organization is the local interfaith council. In North America, a typical evolution has been that a city council of churches becomes a council of churches and synagogues.<sup>13</sup> Then, depending on local demographics, the council becomes multireligious by adding Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Native Americans, Bahà’is and other religious communities. Such councils may also be more regional, covering a county, a region, or a whole state.<sup>14</sup> Such groups characteristically come together to address common tasks in their local communities, while “dialogue” for interfaith understanding may be a secondary aim or an additional result of cooperation.

There are also educational and dialogue events organized by congregations within their own neighborhoods. A lecture series on the world’s religions can be an event sponsored by a single church; two religious congregations may carry on a dialogue or exercise in cooperation.<sup>15</sup> In some large American cities interfaith groups focusing on one section of the city have been created, while intercongregational suburban groups are also developing.

Some Christians have also referred to “the dialogue of life.” Wesley Ariarajah writes of his childhood in the only Christian family in a Hindu neighborhood in Sri Lanka, where interfaith sharing and friendship was formative.<sup>16</sup> When worship is conducted inside the home, as it is for Jews or Hindus (to take two examples), it becomes easier for neighbors to share one another’s religious life. Finally, Elizabeth Amoah reminds us that, when members of an extended family belong to different religions, if they share one another’s festivals or other practices, this is also a form of interfaith relationship. She is speaking especially of her native Ghana, but this may also be the case in many other

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<sup>13</sup>Work in the mid-1980’s to establish the North America Interfaith Network revealed this trend, which has continued until the present to be an important pattern of interfaith life in the region. For descriptions, see Eck, *A New Religious America*, pp. 370–377.

<sup>14</sup>See information available from the North America Interfaith Network, the Pluralism Project, and Interfaith Voices for Peace and Justice (see note 7, above).

<sup>15</sup>E.g., a Hindu-Lutheran dialogue between a temple and a church in Flushing, NY. Eck tells the especially compelling story of a United Methodist church and a mosque that built new houses of worship on adjoining properties (Eck, *A New Religious America*, pp. 348–351).

<sup>16</sup>S. Wesley Ariarajah, “My Dialogue Pilgrimage,” in A. Pushparajan, ed., *Pilgrims of Dialogue: A Collection of Essays Presented to Fr. Albert Nambiaparambil in Honour of His 60th Birthday* (Munnar, Kerala: India Sangam Dialogue Center, 1991), pp. 32–37.

places.<sup>17</sup>

Every school classroom is itself a kind of local community. At the primary- and secondary-school levels, teaching about the world's religions may have important interfaith dimensions. Teaching about religion is a matter of specialized concern dealt with by professional educators and legal experts. Not only cultural context and religious convictions but also legal requirements or restrictions vary from country to country. In the U.S.A. separation of church and state places limits on teaching about religion in public schools.<sup>18</sup> In the United Kingdom, there is an entirely different structure; for example, according to the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom:

In England and Wales Religious Education is a required subject in state schools and by law its teaching must reflect both the historic centrality of Christianity within British religious practice but also the diversity of faiths. Syllabuses are developed locally by "Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education" which include members of local faith groups. There are current plans to draw up a national framework for Religious Education.<sup>19</sup>

In formerly Communist countries, where teaching about religion had been prohibited for decades, educators are now engaged in curriculum development and are now seeking models suitable for their own situations.<sup>20</sup>

#### D. The Sub-national and National Levels

At the national level, networks exist to bring local interfaith organizations, centers, or councils into association with each other or, as in the United Kingdom, to bring national religious communities into cooperation and dialogue. National religious bodies, especially Christian churches, may maintain interfaith offices or assign at least one staff person to interfaith relations along with ecumenical relations. A prominent example internationally is the Roman Catholic bishops' conferences in many countries. Church interfaith officers then may interact with the national networks. There are also issue-oriented national bodies, sometimes faith-based, that work on such issues as conflict resolution and post-conflict reconciliation (see below), race, poverty, the environment,

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<sup>17</sup>In Elizabeth Amoah, *The First Six Years* (Oxford: International Interfaith Centre, 1999), pp. 13–17.

<sup>18</sup>See Charles C. Haynes, *Teaching about Religion in American Life: A First Amendment Guide* (Nashville, TN: First Amendment Center with Oxford University Press, 1998); also Charles C. Haynes, Oliver Thomas, John B. Leach, and John E. Ferguson, eds., *Finding Common Ground: A First Amendment Guide to Religion and Public Education*, rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: First Amendment Center, 1998).

<sup>19</sup>I am indebted to Harriet Crabtree, Deputy Director of the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom, for providing this wording. See also Gwen Palmer, "Religious Education and Worship in Schools: An Introductory Survey," an address to the Plenary Meeting of the Inter Faith Network of the United Kingdom, July 20, 1994; Palmer chairs the Religious Education Council of England and Wales.

<sup>20</sup>See Lev Krichevsky, *The Treatment of Jewish Themes in Russian Schools*, The Central and East European Curriculum Review Project (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2001), pp. 44, 49–60. Krichevsky writes, "In view of the growing interest in Russian society in religion as a cultural phenomenon, the Ministry of Education approved a series of elective courses for high school (grades 10–11) on the history of religion and religious studies. In 1997–98 the first textbooks on this topic were published" (Krichevsky, *Treatment*, p. 49). His study is part of a series on the study of religion in schools in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, published by the American Jewish Committee, that also includes studies on Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine.

women's issues, labor, or promotion of or opposition to a particular religious approach. National organizations may have local and sub-national regional offices; international organizations may have national-level chapters, such as those of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, while independent national groups may also affiliate with international bodies that are "organizations of organizations," such as the International Association for Religious Freedom.

An aspect of interfaith activity of consistent influence in the West has been Jewish-Christian dialogue. Organized Jewish-Christian relations in Europe and the U.S.A. began early in the twentieth century. Immediately after World War II, high-level annual meetings of scholars and religious representatives began, leading to extensive program development<sup>21</sup> and extensive official involvement of churches, including the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>22</sup> Jewish-Christian dialogue has been influential, because early in the history of the interfaith movement it set high standards of seriousness and professionalism. These standards were necessary to Jewish-Christian dialogue because it had clearly defined goals of theological complexity and historic importance, namely, to effect the change of official doctrine on the relation between Christianity and Judaism. This has been a specialized area of concern that calls for expert engagement and long-term continuity. A milestone in this work was the Vatican II document *Nostra aetate* (the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions [1965]). Jewish-Christian programs are often organized on a national basis, based in large communal and religious institutions, or conducted as a scholarly activity sponsored by an academic institution.

For well over a century, scholarship on the world's religious traditions has been a key factor in dealing with questions of religious plurality. Scholars of different religious backgrounds have been frequent participants in interfaith conferences and have made important contributions toward developing positions on a theology of religions, on Jewish-Christian relations, on the relation of "religion" as a general category to particular traditions, on cross-cultural commonalities and differences, on comparative religious ethics,<sup>23</sup> and on a "global ethic."<sup>24</sup> Scholars of religious studies and theology have produced an extensive literature on interreligious questions, much of it by Christian authors.<sup>25</sup>

Academic endeavors may most often be characterized as intermediate- and national-level activities, since scholarly associations are normally organized on national lines or within a language area, although events organized by individual universities or colleges may draw in scholars from much farther afield than the local community, and international associations and conferences do exist. Departments of religious studies,

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<sup>21</sup>For a history, see William W. Simpson and Ruth Weyle, *The Story of the International Council of Christians and Jews* (Heppenheim: International Council of Christians and Jews, n.d.).

<sup>22</sup>See Marcus Braybrooke, *Time to Meet: Towards a Deeper Relationship between Jews and Christians* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1990); idem, *Children of One God: A History of the Council of Christians and Jews* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 1991); idem, *Pilgrimage of Hope*; and International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, *Fifteen Years of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue: 1970-1985*, *Teologia e Filosofia* 11 (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1988).

<sup>23</sup>See David Little and Sumner B. Twiss, *Comparative Religious Ethics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978); and Bruce Grelle and Sumner B. Twiss, eds., *Explorations in Global Ethics: Comparative Religious Ethics and Interreligious Dialogue* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998).

<sup>24</sup>On the project of a "global ethic," see Joel Beversluis, ed., *A Sourcebook of the World's Religions: An Interfaith Guide to Religion and Spirituality*, 3rd ed. (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2000), chap. 22; and Hans Küng and Karl-Josef Kuschel, eds., *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions* (New York: Crossroad, 1993).

<sup>25</sup>See John Berthrong, *Interreligious Dialogue: An Annotated Bibliography* (Wofford Heights, CA: Multifaith Resources, 1993).

institutes, theological schools, and scholarly meetings are venues for comparative study and interreligious dialogue. It is important to note that this modality is not confined to the West but can be found in many countries in all regions of the world.

#### E. The International Level

The following discussion of international interfaith organizations will focus mainly on an estimate of the scope of their activities. Some international organizations, as just noted, have substantively extended the global extent of interfaith work by proactively establishing national chapters in a number of countries and also regional international structures. These have increased the volume of interfaith activity in those areas or have even served as the first or main interfaith body in certain places. Other international organizations have extended the scope of interfaith activity by drawing into an international cooperative network particular religious communities that might otherwise be isolated.

In some cases, a program or organization that defines itself as “international” or has a name beginning with “world” is more global in intention than in actual structural reach. Interfaith organizations with global aspirations do succeed, however, in involving outstanding scholars and religious leaders of international stature in a variety of events, often linked in some way to the U.N. Such activities may serve a useful function in fostering a “global consciousness” and awareness of the need for and possibility of interreligious understanding and cooperation, pointing toward more on-the-ground implementation of concrete projects. This is so, especially if the program is well publicized and/or publishes its proceedings, so that ideas, proposals, and symbolic impact reach an audience wider than those physically in attendance.

All international organizations place importance on involving well-known religious leaders. They are the currency, so to speak, of international interfaith programs. This emphasis seems to have two rationales. First, the publicity generated by the presence of high-ranking or famous spiritual leaders sends a message about the legitimacy of interfaith activity to the general public, as well as to members of those religious communities whose leaders participate. An image is projected of interfaith work endorsed “at the top.” Second, the interfaith organizations themselves may in some cases not only project the image that religious leaders involve their communities by being present and representing them, but they may also expect that religious leaders can deliver their constituencies to active participation in the organization’s programs.

The interfaith offices of global Christian institutions, notably those of the Vatican and the World Council of Churches, have done historic work in redefining their churches’ positions on the relation of Christianity to other religions, a demanding and contentious task continuing through the last fifty years.<sup>26</sup> Interlocking theological issues with far-reaching practical consequences have included the possibility of salvation for non-Christians, the purpose of missions, and the nature and implications of “dialogue,” a term the understanding of which has evolved. As Robert B. Sheard has observed,

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<sup>26</sup>For detailed narratives, see Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope*; and Robert B. Sheard, *Interreligious Dialogue in the Catholic Church since Vatican II*, Toronto Studies in Theology 31 (Lewiston, NY; and Queenston, Ont.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987).

there is a constant questioning about the relationship between dialogue, mission and witness. This problem reflects a certain confusion about the nature and goal of dialogue, and indeed, its very legitimacy. Dialogue by its very nature involves a respect for the beliefs of others and a willingness to let the other remain in his or her faith. Dialogue is seen as an encounter between those who are committed to their respective faiths. In opposition to this, on the other hand, is a strong evangelical missionary tendency which emphasizes the demand to persuade others to leave their religion and become Christian. There is the underlying fear that dialogue betrays the Christian duty to make disciples of all peoples.<sup>27</sup>

These intrareligious differences among Christians remain unresolved. Some accept dialogue without the aim of proselytization, while others regard it as a form of “pre-evangelization.”<sup>28</sup> Very large numbers of evangelical Christians throughout the world do not support interfaith work or oppose it. Overall, much of the task still remains to be done of educating rank-and-file members about the changes in their own churches’ theology, if these have been adopted.<sup>29</sup> It should be added here that intrareligious divisions on the relation of one’s own to other faiths is by no means limited to Christianity.

Some international interfaith organizations seek to build a sense of global community by holding large gatherings (also found in the ecumenical movement) that are open to rank-and-file religionists as well as to high-level religious leaders and scholars or other experts. Such inclusive, egalitarian meetings, involving thousands of participants, can involve hundreds of workshops, lectures, sub-conferences, dialogues, meditations, and cultural performances. The Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions is a prominent example. Despite the logistical and financial challenges in organizing such large events, these open forums provide the most abundant opportunities for cultivating personal contact and friendship, to the end of building interreligious harmony on the global and “multiple-local” levels, in addition to the national and local levels. As it is often said that not religions but people engage in dialogue, the human factor in face-to-face encounter applies not only in neighborhoods, cities, and countries but also globally.

Open forums also provide the opportunity for a free-flowing exchange of information and ideas on all topics of concern to participants, in a manner similar to the Non-Governmental Organizations’ assemblies held in conjunction with the important series of international U.N. meetings on critical global issues that began with the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

### *III. A Brief Geographical Survey*

The analysis above gives a vertical “cut” of the overall picture of interfaith work. It would seem logical at this point to offer as well a horizontal geographical picture that will *inter alia* help to identify which conditions seem to lead to growth of interfaith activity and which to prevent it, but such an overview is difficult to do; it threatens to

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<sup>27</sup>Sheard, *Interreligious Dialogue*, pp. 185–186.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>29</sup>For a recent overview and analysis of Christian theology on these questions, see Paul Knitter, *Theologies of Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002).

become an inventory, which space does not permit. I will therefore attempt an extremely abbreviated geographical summary and then offer some suggestions as to the factors affecting the growth of interfaith activity either positively or negatively.

Certain types of interfaith programs can be found in most, though not all, regions of the world. As noted above, these are the city-based interfaith centers and councils; scholars' activities, including work through institutes attached to colleges and universities; the interfaith programs of church bodies, including national conferences of Catholic bishops, councils of churches, and denominational bodies and seminaries; and the chapters, affiliates, or international regional bodies of global organizations. In areas where Christianity has historically been the dominant religion, including Latin America and Australia, there are also Jewish-Christian dialogues.

Against this background, the picture varies. Interfaith work is most developed in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the U.S.A.; of these three, the United Kingdom is probably the most advanced. In Latin America and the Caribbean, interfaith councils and centers are found in a number of capital or major cities, and the Roman Catholic Church is a key player in both multireligious and Jewish-Christian dialogues. Western Europe has longstanding organizations but less local activity;<sup>30</sup> there is now, however, an increase in local programs responding to new religious diversity, especially the growth in Muslim populations caused by immigration.

The formerly Communist countries are emerging from decades of repression not only of religious life in practice but also of scholarship and discussion that provide intellectual tools for thinking about "religion" as such and about religious plurality. Different kinds of interfaith activity are developing linked to historic and present religious and ethnic divisions. In the former Soviet Union, dialogues take place in urban settings; some large conferences have been held, and a high-level Interreligious Council of Russia has recently been founded. The post-conflict situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has generated a variety of interfaith groups, including an Inter-Religious Council of religious leaders; some of these groups in their earlier stages were assisted by outside organizations.<sup>31</sup> In Macedonia, also the site of conflict, the late President Boris Trajkovski convened a major meeting of religious representatives and scholars in 2002 with the help of American collaborators, which led to the formation of a national interreligious council.<sup>32</sup>

In Asia, historically diverse India presents both a centuries-old "dialogue of life" and a variety of locally founded interfaith activities, including Gandhian and other spiritually based groups working on social issues (their number is hard to estimate), the sometimes controversial "Christian ashrams,"<sup>33</sup> and a few large interfaith organizations founded in India maintaining strong international ties. In Southeast Asia and East Asia one finds a similar picture, with some national councils, smaller groups including bilateral dialogues (such as Buddhist-Muslim), and the strong role of Christian churches, international

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<sup>30</sup>See, e.g., Reinhard Kirste, "Interreligiöse Dialog und religiöse Pluralismus in Deutschland," in Reinhard Kirste, Michael Klöcker, Paul Schwarzenau, and Udo Tworuschka, eds., *Vision 2001: Die grössere Ökumene*, Interreligiöse Horizonte 1 (Cologne: Interreligiöse Arbeitsstelle, 1999). E.T. on the Internet at [www.interrel.de](http://www.interrel.de) under "Neue Veröffentlichungen, Infotexte, Rezensionen."

<sup>31</sup>For a detailed account, see David Smock, *Can Faith-Based NGOs Advance Interfaith Reconciliation? The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, United States Institute of Peace Special Report 103 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2003).

<sup>32</sup>See David R. Smock, "Divine Intervention: Religious Reconciliation through Faith," *Harvard International Review* 25 (Winter, 2004): 47–48.

<sup>33</sup>Michael O'Toole, *Christian Ashrams in India* (Pune: Ishvani Kendra, 1983).

organizations, and academics as noted. In Indonesia interfaith activity is well developed in Java and Bali, with the city of Yogyakarta alone home to many dialogue groups. Japan has a uniquely elaborate national interreligious bureaucracy, the Japan Conference of Religious Representatives. In Japan and Korea there is strong involvement of new religious movements, which offer substantial financial support and energetic participation to international organizations.

The interfaith movement in Australia appears to show earlier stages of developments resembling those in the United Kingdom and Canada.

In Africa, important efforts are now under way to create a continental structure with regional components. In South Africa in 2002 a historic Inter-Faith Peace Summit was held with representatives from across Africa, facilitated by the Lutheran World Federation and other faith-based organizations. The first regional conference, also in South Africa, took place in 2003.<sup>34</sup> Another notable recent development in Africa is the formation of interfaith groups set up in direct response to civil war or other violent conflict, such as the Inter-Faith Mediation Center begun in Nigeria in the mid-1990's, the Interreligious Council of Sierra Leone founded in 1997, and the Sudan Inter-Religious Council inaugurated in 2003.<sup>35</sup>

In the Middle East, Israel has dozens of groups devoted to "coexistence" and interfaith relations also responding to decades of war (more than seventy groups affiliate with the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel), while elsewhere in the Middle East recent initiatives include the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies in Jordan and an International Seminar on Environment, Religion and Culture held in Tehran in June, 2001, convened by the Government of Iran.

What conclusions can be drawn informally from looking at this map of interfaith work, region by region? Several factors would appear to be associated with the emergence and growth of interfaith activity. Perhaps the strongest factor catalyzing the development of interfaith activity in any locality is a multireligious population. In areas where the population is mostly of a single religion, there is likely to be less motivation for interaction between religions, which may be seen as abstract and irrelevant. Religious minorities often have a strong motivation for interfaith interaction; examples would include Christians in Asia; Muslims, Buddhists, or Hindus in Western countries; and Jews in Christian-majority countries. Tension or violent conflict exacerbated by religious divisions, as already emphasized, is a compelling reason for organizing interfaith activities. In areas where religious diversity has not led to conflict, this particular motive may be weaker.

In countries where government or religious authority denies freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion and belief, there is no encouragement or even permission for the formation of the array of citizens' groups collectively known as "civil society."<sup>36</sup> New religious groups may be actively suppressed, and interfaith activity

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<sup>34</sup>Information on this initiative is available at the website of the Lutheran World Federation, [www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org).

<sup>35</sup>On the Inter-Faith Mediation Center in Nigeria, see Smock, "Divine Intervention," pp. 46–50. The founding of the Interreligious Council of Sierra Leone was facilitated and supported by the World Conference of Religions for Peace, as were those in Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Uganda. The Sudan Inter-Religious Council is the outcome of efforts by the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy. For information, see the websites of these organizations: [www.wcrp.org](http://www.wcrp.org) (or [www.religionsforpeace.org](http://www.religionsforpeace.org)) and [www.icrd.org](http://www.icrd.org).

<sup>36</sup>"Civil society" may be defined as the sector of society made up of voluntary associations formed for any purpose other than commercial purposes and not sponsored by the government.

cannot flourish. Such conditions will vary in degree and kind from one country to another and may change over time.

Where there has been a thriving scholarly pursuit of the study of religion and interreligious questions and the growth of liberal religious thought, it may be easier for the idea of “dialogue and cooperation among religions” to take hold. These intellectual traditions are a kind of cultural capital upon which interfaith life can draw. Finally, some types of programs are difficult to mount if funds or publication and research facilities are limited. However, in population centers that are religiously diverse, extensive interaction can be organized even without the abundant resources to be found in “developed” or industrialized countries.

#### *IV. Issues and Problems*

I turn now to an account of some of the most important problems and issues that face interfaith work at present. As will be evident, these issues are closely interrelated.

##### *A. The One-Global-Organization Problem*

The idea of a global organization of the world’s religions is an archetype of our time. The creation of the League of Nations, followed by that of the U.N., intensified efforts to found a global interreligious organization. Rudolf Otto, among many others, proposed such an organization early in the 1920’s,<sup>37</sup> while Eleanor Roosevelt spoke of “a spiritual United Nations.”<sup>38</sup> During his tenure as Secretary General of the U.N. (1961–71), U Thant encouraged meetings of religious leaders at the U.N. At the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders held at the U.N. in 2000, U Thant’s daughter, Aye Aye Myint U, stated that her father had envisioned the General Assembly Hall as a place where not only delegations of member states but also leaders of the world’s religions would meet from time to time.<sup>39</sup> Countless other well- and lesser-known individuals have cherished similar dreams of the coming together of religions on a global basis.

Some have thus seen international interfaith work as necessarily leading toward one global institution, a single officially representative council of the religions with a permanent secretariat supporting it. Both the model of the United Nations and that of the World Council of Churches loom large over this enterprise. The difficulty with this concept is that there actually are in existence a good number of interfaith organizations that are global in their aspirations. Of these, at least two or three have wished to be, or to become in the future, the one and only umbrella for interfaith work in the world. Centralization or “umbrella-fication” would in time (according to this wish) generate the envisioned single official interreligious body, as well as a number of specialized agencies and programs, somewhat like the U.N. system. The direct result of this ambition has been to create intense competition between international organizations, vying for association with the U.N., funding, and the participation of important religious leaders, as well as

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<sup>37</sup>Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope*, p. 115.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 94. Eleanor Roosevelt used this phrase when she was approached by Juliet Hollister for help in starting the Temple of Understanding in 1960.

<sup>39</sup>My own notes of the proceedings of the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, held at the United Nations and the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York, August 28–31, 2000.



publicity and general support. This undermines the effectiveness of interfaith work as a whole and is at cross purposes with the professed values of this work. Such competition can only be deplored. Happily it can be reported that international organizations have started to meet to address this problem and are now taking positive steps to increase cooperation.<sup>40</sup>

#### B. The “Representativity” Problem

Following directly from the idea of a world organization of religions influenced by the United Nations and World Council of Churches models is the norm of official “representativity.” This may be defined as participation by religionists who have been designated as representatives to an interfaith body or meeting by their own religious organizations through some established official process and who have possibly also been empowered to act on behalf of their organizations by voting on policy and issues, signing declarations, and so forth. Such officially representative multilateral conferences (not bilateral dialogues) are likely to be subject to certain shortcomings.

First, religions differ exceedingly in their structures of authority, and most are polycentric rather than centralized. It is no simple matter to determine how and when a representative may be “officially” mandated by his or her institution or community to take part in an interfaith activity on behalf of that institution or community. Further, which are the institutions and communities that will be looked upon as in their turn representing a whole “religion”? Indeed, what counts as “a religion”—and who is to decide? How would we bring in more than partial “representation” of the world’s religions with their vast reach and many sub-traditions?

Second, interreligious divisions and differences are so deep and bitter, and the “common task” they attempt is so immense, that officially representative gatherings on the international level tend to issue vacuous, nonspecific, and nonbinding statements declaring in general terms that peace is good, poverty is bad, we must save the environment, children are the future, we need to work together, and the like. (One colleague has characterized such statements as “Goodness is good.” In fairness it must be admitted that nonofficial meetings are equally capable of issuing generic declarations.)

Third, if a religious body does not give high priority to interfaith activity but is requested to assign an official representative, it may not designate the most capable or committed person. The convening organization may not be able to change this, just as the U.N. cannot tell member states whom to appoint as ambassador. It may also happen that the same individual, well or less qualified, participates in a number of activities for his or her own institution, leading to repeated attendance of the same people at different meetings. This points up the usefulness of the inclusive nonofficial open forums described above.

#### C. The Inclusion-Exclusion Problem

Officially representative organizations and programs are especially subject to a difficulty that is also faced sometimes by nonrepresentative associations. This is the “We

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<sup>40</sup>The first of a now ongoing series of International Interfaith Organisations Cooperation Meetings was held at Harris Manchester College, Oxford, in March, 2001.

won't join if the so-and-so's are there" or the "It's us or them" problem. The question may revolve around the membership or participation of new religious movements or self-declared new religions seen as "cults" or as deviant by older religious entities. It may just as well turn on very old divisions between sub-traditions of a religion or between religions themselves. It has happened, for example, that a group of churches withdrew from a major open forum over the presence of Neo-Pagans<sup>41</sup> and that a national interfaith organization split into two groups when a new religion, feared to be a cult, became part of it.<sup>42</sup> An attempt in the mid-1980's to merge several major international organizations into a new world interfaith body ran aground partly on such obstacles.

In some cities interfaith events remain nonofficial, and an officially representative council cannot be set up because of the intractability of this problem. Ultimatums by religious groups who withhold participation or threaten to pull out place the organizers of a program on the spot, forcing the issue of which religious participation is more important and necessary to the program's success, creating a *de facto* prioritization of religions in which some groups are excluded from participation in order to secure the participation of others.

Concerning the issue of new religious movements and new religions, it must be acknowledged that new movements have made an important contribution to interfaith life, both financially and in terms of labor and commitment. At the same time, new movements are often in search of legitimation—indeed, so intensely, that their presence may be assured in interfaith gatherings, while older religious communities do not bother to come or may even refuse. The worst-case scenario is that an activity will include only new groups, while historic traditions are absent. The so-called "hundred years rule" used by some organizations was brought into being to deal with this problem. The first time I heard of it, the director of a leading urban interfaith council explained that the rule requires that a movement be at least 100 years old before it is admitted to a program. He added, "We want to be sure that your charismatic founder is dead."

#### D. The Role of Christians

In international interfaith organizations the staff professionals running the organizations day-to-day are often of Christian background. We have noted that the majority of publications on interreligious questions are by Christian theologians. Further, we have commented on the relevance of the ecumenical church-bureaucracy model on hopes for a world interfaith organization. What does all this mean, and is it a cause for concern?

There are several reasons for this state of affairs, some of which are the same as the conditions conducive to interfaith activity listed above. First is that, among the world's religions, Christianity has by far the largest population. Second is that material resources for programs and publications are abundant in the largely Christian, developed countries, as they also are in Japan. Third is that comparative scholarship on religion has had a greater development in the West. Fourth, the bad conscience, repentance, and self-examination of Christians in connection with Antisemitism and the Holocaust and also

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<sup>41</sup>Orthodox Churches, from the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1993.

<sup>42</sup>Korea and the Unification Church. See Sungon Kim, "Interfaith Activity in East Asia," *IARF World*, 1996 (1), p. 1.

with the sufferings of colonized and missionized peoples have been a major impetus for interfaith work. The influence of Jewish-Christian dialogue, setting a standard of professionalism, has already been mentioned.

The endorsement of human rights inscribed in the U.N. Charter in 1945, and given fuller form in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, was a signal of a renewed commitment to fundamental freedoms, including religious freedom. These ideals had a long history in the West, and it had been affirmed by the Allies that World War II was fought to protect these freedoms worldwide. All of this helped create a climate for the growth of the interfaith movement in the West in the postwar period. None of these factors is in itself a bad thing. As a movement must start somewhere, one should acknowledge without undue worry the role that Christians have played so far. The history of the movement shows as well the great part played in organizational life by Jews, Muslims, followers of Asian religions, and others. Not a specifically Christian agenda but, rather, the call of a common task and the need to get along with our neighbors have been the even more important dynamic from the beginning of the movement in the late nineteenth century to the present. This will continue to be so.

#### E. The “Abrahamic” Question

Clearly, the geopolitical and interreligious issues pertaining to Islam, Christianity, and Judaism are critical. They demand specialized and concentrated attention, which they are now receiving. Recognition of this genuine urgency should not, however, reinforce an already existing tendency for some Westerners to feel that relations among Muslims, Christians, and Jews are all that interfaith work really calls for. In this prioritization, explained to me a few years ago by a Roman Catholic official, Christian ecumenism comes first, followed by relations with the Jews and then with Islam. After that comes “everyone else,” that is, all the religions of Asia and Indigenous religions.

This can lead to what may be called an Abrahamic exclusivism, which reflects even now the self-image of the West as dominant, as well as the very large numbers of Christians and Muslims. A split could widen between programs involving the Abrahamic religions with token or no participation by others and programs with greater strength in Asian and Indigenous participation but neglected by powerful Christian and Muslim communities and institutions. Dialogue and cooperation among the Abrahamic faiths are not only of great intrinsic importance but are also essential to interfaith work’s ultimate goals of global peace and understanding. They should be pursued, however, without regarding the non-Abrahamic religious traditions as inferior or their issues as of little consequence.

#### F. Religion and “Spirituality”

Nonofficial and inclusive interfaith programs attract a good many participants seeking not only dialogue, cooperation, and fellowship but also exploration into various forms of spirituality. Commentators have noted an increasing tendency of some people in Western countries to speak of themselves as “spiritual” while avoiding commitment to “organized religion” or to a definite religious identity. (This is a somewhat different question from

those of “double belonging,” “multiple belonging,” or practice across boundaries.)<sup>43</sup> This emphasis on “spirituality” rather than “religion” presents a challenge to all those who deal primarily in terms of official representation and the historical religions. Charges of facile universalism, shallow individualism, syncretism, and dilettantism can readily be brought against “religionless” spiritual seekers.

To these charges one must respond that both liturgical worship and spirituality in the sense of contemplative practice and inner experience have been part of all the historical religious traditions. Thus, spirituality cannot be removed from interfaith exchange. One has only to think of the interreligious dialogue organized by Benedictine and Trappist monks and nuns with their Buddhist and Hindu counterparts<sup>44</sup> to be reminded of how important spirituality can be to interfaith understanding. Study and sharing of contemplative practices is one important and serious element in the interfaith movement, and the spiritual dimension more generally continues to provide much momentum. Moreover, if a broad and deep trend in religious and cultural life is in fact moving in the direction of an emphasis on “spirituality,” it may be condemned by some but cannot be suppressed without violating the basic human right of religious freedom. Without question, certain kinds of explorations into “spirituality” are, or tend to be, syncretistic or secular and lose their explicitly interreligious focus. Yet, as this survey has tried to show, there should be ample room in the interfaith movement for a stress on spirituality as well as on many other approaches.

## V. Conclusion

The interfaith movement in all of its many aspects is an intentional response to the facts of religious plurality and diversity, in whatever way these facts may present themselves. Plurality is manyness, and diversity is difference; these are concrete givens in contemporary society. “Pluralism” can be understood as a practical and constructive relationship to these givens (as distinct from theological positions sometimes called “pluralism”). Pluralism goes beyond mere “contact” or even “tolerance” to a conscious and dynamic interaction with the realities of plurality and diversity. As Eck has emphasized, “[P]luralism is not the sheer fact of plurality alone, but is active engagement with plurality.”<sup>45</sup>

Interfaith work has been spurred by awareness, keener now than ever, that the alternatives to this conscious and active engagement are willed ignorance, self-imposed isolation, religious triumphalism, and, most of all, religiously influenced discrimination and violence. In the history of the interfaith movement now over 100 years old, the forms

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<sup>43</sup>See Robert C. Fuller, *Spiritual but Not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). On practicing across boundaries, see John Berthrong, *The Divine Deli: Religious Identity in the North American Cultural Mosaic* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999). On “double belonging,” see Katherine Kurs, ed., *Searching for Your Soul: Writers of Many Faiths Share Their Stories of Spiritual Discovery* (New York: Schocken Books, 1999); and articles by various authors on “Dual Belonging/Personal Journeys” in *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, vol. 23 (2003). For Christian perspectives on “multiple belonging,” see Catherine Cornille, ed., *Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity*, Faith Meets Faith Series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002).

<sup>44</sup>This program began in 1978. Full information is available at the website of the Monastic Interreligious Dialogue at [www.monasticdialog.org](http://www.monasticdialog.org).

<sup>45</sup>Diana L. Eck, *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), p. 191; emphasis in the original.

of this engagement have varied and have evolved. High-level and specialized programs have made an important early contribution. The development of the study of religion, bringing with it a view of “religion” as a universal human phenomenon, has laid an important foundation, as has laborious theological revision done by church bodies and official dialogues. Without theological groundwork, interreligious relations on the social level may be on shaky ground. The meetings of international organizations have also provided to those involved the indispensable experience of face-to-face encounter and collaboration of participants from different parts of the world. All these kinds of work have had their effects on the life of local communities through religious education and the increasingly familiar public example of religious leaders’ meeting for discussion and prayer.

Certainly the most striking and important feature of the interfaith movement today, however, is the growth of interfaith activity at the local level. This is the greatest contrast to the movement’s early decades, and it seems to signal a new phase. The increase of local interfaith programs is important not only because it represents an ever wider horizontal reach of practical pluralism but also because it actualizes an ever deeper reach. It is in the local setting that members of different religious traditions can meet not just regularly and often but also over time, building enduring friendships and joining together for the long term in ongoing partnerships and mutual education about the realities of their day-to-day lives and their deepest, most abiding concerns. This kind of continuity and depth promises more powerful and lasting results of interfaith work wherever it takes place. We must hope, even against hope, that in the twenty-first century—the interfaith movement’s second century—these results will mean progress toward a world where religious difference enriches rather than threatens all of our communities.

## Appendix<sup>46</sup>

The Abraham Fund Initiatives  
American Interfaith Institute/World Alliance of Interfaith Organizations  
American Jewish Committee  
Association on Religion and Intellectual Life  
Bangladesh Inter-religious Council for Peace and Justice  
Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding  
Center for Global Ethics  
Center for Interreligious Understanding  
Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies, University of Gadjah Mada  
Center for World Thanksgiving  
Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions  
Fellowship in Prayer  
Fellowship of Reconciliation  
Forum on Religion and Ecology  
Global Dialogue Institute

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<sup>46</sup>See note 6, above.

Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute  
Henry Martyn Institute  
Institute for Interreligious, Intercultural Dialogue  
Instituto de Estudos da Religião  
Interfaith Alliance  
The Interfaith Center of New York  
Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington  
Interfaith Council for the Protection of Animals and Nature  
Interfaith Encounter Association  
Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom  
Interfaith Partnership for the Environment, U.N. Environment Programme  
Interfaith Voices for Peace and Justice  
Interfidei  
International Association for Religious Freedom  
International Communities for Renewal of the Earth  
International Conference of Christians and Jews  
International Consultancy on Religion Education, and Culture  
International Interfaith Center  
Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel  
Inter-religious Federation for World Peace  
Inter-Religious Forum for Communal Harmony  
Japan Conference of Religious Representatives  
MADIA (Masyarakat Dialog Antar Agama)  
Malaysian Interfaith Network  
Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders  
Monastic Interreligious Dialogue  
Multifaith Resources  
National Conference for Communities and Justice  
National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.  
National Religious Partnership on the Environment  
North America Interfaith Network  
Peace Council  
Pluralism Project  
Pontifical Council on Inter-religious Dialogue  
Religious Consultation on Population, Reproductive Health, and Ethics  
Rio de Janeiro Interfaith Network  
Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, Jordan  
Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies  
Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding  
Temple of Understanding  
United Religions Initiative  
World Conference of Religions for Peace  
World Congress of Faiths  
World Council of Churches  
World Faiths Development Dialogue

World Fellowship of Interreligious Councils  
World Fellowship of Religions  
World Interfaith Congress  
Yayasan Dharma Samuan Tiga, Bali

## **Religion in the 21st Century**

**By Jeff Israel**

It is tempting to begin any reflection on religion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the presumably shocking news that religion has not yet disappeared. The presumption of surprise would be based on a story about the modern world that goes something like this: about three-hundred years ago a combination of new ideas, new social movements, new economic forces, and new technology conspired (in Europe) to set in motion the “disenchantment” of the world – that is, the end of a world self-evidently inhabited by magical and supernatural forces. According to this story, religion (associated with belief in the supernatural) would be replaced by reason, science, and freedom from traditional authority wherever people dared to enter the modern world. Given that modern technology, ideas, and institutions now dominate the globe more completely than ever, the fact that religious life seems to be thriving in the 21<sup>st</sup> century would indeed appear to discredit this particular story.

But the disenchantment story was never an entirely adequate account of religion and its prospects in modern times. So, we need not be surprised by its endurance. Religion, as we think of it today, was not condemned to obsolescence by the modern world; *it was born in the modern world*. What can this possibly mean? Surely people celebrated Christmas before the French Revolution, traveled to Mecca before the invention of the steam engine, and contemplated the Dharma before the proliferation of newspapers. Nonetheless, the “religion” we refer to when we reflect on “religion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century,” and the religions we conjure in our minds, are every bit as modern as the revolutionary “Rights of Man,” industrial factories, and the daily press. Understanding

the present and future of religion requires understanding the sense in which religion is a constituent element *and* a product of the modern world; first, then, an explanation of the term “modern” is required.

The term “modern” only very loosely refers, here, to a specific period of time (say, after the 17<sup>th</sup> century, or something like that). Rather, to be modern is to be defined in relation to a specific configuration of institutions, categories, anxieties, propensities, practices and other such things. This configuration has emerged in different ways at different times in different places; it never looks exactly the same in one place as it does in any other. But everything defined in relation to this configuration, everything *modern*, shares something like a family resemblance.

What are these institutions, categories, anxieties, propensities, and practices that, arranged in dynamic relation to one another, define everything modern? First among equals must be *the modern state*. A modern state has a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence in a distinct area with clear borders. As the sole enforcer in its territory, it enforces laws and compels the payment of taxes. Modern states are bureaucratically organized and rely on a class of bureaucrats to run their everyday operations; they have prisons; they are protected by uniformed armies, identified by flags, and populated by citizens (among others).

Significantly, as the first modern states emerged – in Western Europe – each characteristically relied on *religious intolerance* to build a stable population of citizens that would recognize the legitimacy of the state, pay its taxes, and serve in its army. The formative tasks of building a bureaucracy and raising a loyal army were accompanied by the equally formative task of establishing a religion that would be integral to the state; likewise, a religion (or religions) that would be deemed an alien danger to the state also had to be established. Those who identified with the alien religion would be persecuted or even expelled.

In these early states, elite rulers, who identified strongly with the favored religion, could enjoy solidarity with those in the general population who also identified with the favored religion; the bond between elite rulers and the mass of the ruled was sealed as they joined together in persecuting those identified with the alien religion. And, (to introduce another crucial component of the modern configuration), the incitement of this solidarity-building religious persecution was made possible partly by the development of *modern printing technology*, which enabled the widespread distribution of hateful and divisive pamphlets written in the vernacular of the general population.

In the pages of these pamphlets, in the symbols and stories adorning each new state, and in the imaginations of each new state’s loyal subjects, another component of the modern configuration emerged: *the modern nation*. Before modern nations emerged most people identified primarily with very local communities: with folks speaking the same dialect, with a tribe or clan or family or monastic order or guild, with other farmers, and even with the local elites competing for authority: nobles, priests, sheiks, Brahmins, chiefs, rabbis, etc.

After modern national consciousness takes hold of the imagination these smaller communities are either dismantled or otherwise subordinated to membership in the nation. With the birth of modern nations, national languages and styles are promoted and local dialects and customs are rendered “quaint;” national newspapers circulate in the



national language recording “news”: events and information relevant for every member of the nation; when something is happening to the nation, something is happening to *you* – the history of the nation is *your* history; national holidays organize the year; men are plucked from their homes to serve in the nation’s defense; the story of the nation is moving, emotionally riveting – it’s *your* story, it points to *your* destiny.

Sometimes a modern nation will grow up in such close kinship to a modern state that the two seem nearly indistinguishable: the state is run by national leaders, subjects of the state within its territory share the same national identity, and the language of state operations is the language of the nation. In these cases, competition *within* the nation to define its character and its leadership can be a source of conflict. But sometimes a territory controlled by a single state structure will be inhabited by more than one nation, each with its own language, sense of history and destiny: competition *between* nations for control over the state’s legitimate use of violence can also instigate conflict. Many of the conflicts, anxieties and propensities that define the modern configuration are produced by tensions *within* and *between* nations and states.

*Modern religion* also emerges in these dynamic tensions. Religion is defined as the obsolete authority over life as it was before the triumph of the nation, by nations that define themselves against religion (these are “secular” nations); religion is appropriated to provide social services and moral legitimation to the state in states built on the protection of the private interests of individual citizens (these are “liberal” states); religion is promoted as integral to national identity and legitimate state authority in nation-states that define themselves by religion (these are “religious” nation-states). And these are just a few obvious combinations – many different arrangements of state, nation, and religion exist and there is still room for innovation.

In every case, though, what counts as “religion” always emerges in dynamic relation to “state” and “nation;” and, at the same time, the definitions of “state” and “nation” are likewise always contentious and always relative to the definition of “religion.” However one might have related to God, the Buddha, Jesus, Mohammad, the Upanishads, the Talmud, the temple, the shrine, the mountain, the river, prayer, meditation, the medicine-man, the Priestess, or the Guru before the emergence of the modern configuration – after its emergence, all of these would be compelled to explain their role in the modern world; they would be compelled to explain their relationships to the other parts of the modern configuration. And in every case, the process of *explanation* – and *translation* into the language of the modern configuration – proves to be a process of *transformation*.

To be counted as a religion at all can be more or less attractive in a modern context: to be considered a religion seems more advantageous than to be considered a “cult,” for example. In a liberal state, religions contribute to each individual’s conscience helping him or her to be a good citizen; in the same state, cults (along with “extremists” and “sects”) “brainwash” individuals, thereby crippling their individuality and interfering with the purported *raison d’être* of the liberal state. Similarly, in liberal states that legally protect religion it is far more advantageous to be under the category of religion than listed under “culture” or “philosophy”: religious justifications can often garner exceptions to otherwise universally applicable laws where cultural or philosophical justifications cannot. On the other hand, in a secular nation-state a minority group may be able to thrive

more easily protected as a cultural, “ethnic,” or even national minority than as a religious minority.

Modern religions sometimes compete for state power, sometimes provide a basis for social solidarity on behalf of the state, and sometimes provide leverage to criticize the state. If a modern religion does not seek to control the state, or destroy the state, it cedes the legitimate use of violence to the state and contents itself with being “persuasive.” In the modern world, where every aspect of life has its own experts and sources of professed authority, religions aim to be persuasive to their members on subjects that states, nations, and other modern institutions tend to ignore. For instance, since the state is by definition sovereign over the “natural” world, religion is free to claim a monopoly on legitimate recourse to the “supernatural.” Modern religion implicitly accepts the modern distinction between the natural and the supernatural and often distinguishes itself in the modern configuration by drawing its legitimacy from “belief” in the supernatural. It is a characteristic of modern religion that its references are not self-evident, but must be *believed*.

As another example, modern religion can function as a basis for morality when state laws profess to be only *legal* and not *moral*. Or, where modern social science claims only to describe societies as they *are*, modern religion asserts itself aiming to be persuasive about how societies *should be*. Where natural scientists claim expertise on the *nature* of the world, religion fills a niche by claiming expertise on the *meaning* of the world. Where basic needs, financial security and the desire for wealth define mundane everyday life, modern religion stands out as a source of spiritual authority, transcendence, the sacred, the holy, and the ultimate.

So, modern religions tend to explain themselves to the world in terms of what they *believe* concerning *God*, the *supernatural*, the *moral*, the *metaphysical*, and the *spiritual*. The *faith* of modern religions is often carefully pruned of local practices, magic, and “superstition”: the systematic beliefs or “theology” of a modern religion can be summarized in a chapter for a book on “the religions of the world.” Modern religion, then, tends not to encompass all aspects of human life; its special role becomes clear as it is distinguished from other modern categories: religion vs. art, religion vs. culture, religion vs. science, religion vs. politics, religion vs. society, etc.

A modern person looking for religion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will see the dynamic relations of religion, state, and nation at play in any place he or she looks. Such a person will see the religion of Hinduism defined in a contentious debate about the nature of Indian national identity, the religion of Judaism defined amidst an international conflict over the rightful borders of the State of Israel, the religion of Christianity defined as it is deployed in interest-group politics in the U.S.A. (or as it is carefully segregated from such interest-group politics), the religion of Islam defined in its capacity as the foundation of the state in Iran, and the religion of Buddhism defined as it poses a challenge to the claim of state sovereignty by the People’s Republic of China in Tibet; and that’s just to name some well-known examples.

The role of religion in relation to such modern states and nations is particularly determined by their fundamental vulnerability. Modern states and modern nations are always under a cloud of suspicion – like modern religion, they are always compelled to explain themselves. After all, if the state is the sole *legitimate* enforcer in its territory, and

the nation is the *legitimate* community of which *you* are an obligated member, then a troubling question immediately arises: what is the source of this *legitimacy*? With its privileged recourse to the supernatural, and a reliable community of believers linked in a chain of tradition to an anchoring authority that is generally external to the state, religion often provides an answer to this modern crisis of legitimacy. Religion can present itself as a guarantor of the political order or as an alternative to the political order.

This question of legitimacy haunts everything modern, not just the modern state and the modern nation. And answers can come from any number of modern disciplines: they can be philosophical, economic, theological, sociological, biological – to name a few common sources. Whichever discipline is privileged in a given modern context, answers to the question of legitimacy can generally be situated in the basic modern tension between “enlightenment” and “romantic” tendencies. Not surprisingly, this basic modern tension also defines the vocabulary wherever modern religion is compelled to justify its own legitimacy or the legitimacy of the state or nation.

Enlightenment and romanticism go together like two sides of the same modern coin. It is a common mistake to equate “modern” with “enlightenment,” but everything modern is saturated with the tension between *both* enlightenment *and* romanticism. Here are some things associated with the enlightenment tendency in the modern configuration: the belief that conflicts can be resolved through dispassionate rational thinking, the view that history is always progressing toward a better future, and the confidence that human beings can successfully design and build a better world using their own reason.

The enlightenment tendency is articulated in scientific metaphors: it quantifies, calculates, reduces, and proves. It counsels self-discipline over self-indulgence, clarity and order over ambiguity and chaos, cleanness over messiness, severely restrained sexuality over flagrant sexual desire. It pictures human beings as part of a natural world that is governed by universal rules and can be understood and controlled by any rational individual: any question about the world that is not nonsense can be answered, any rational person can be taught to discover the answers, and none of the true answers contradict each other.

The romantic tendency, on the flipside, celebrates emotional and irrational expression, applauds violence and martyrdom on behalf of a sincere cause, distrusts the human ability to understand and control the world, aspires to touch the mysterious, the infinite, and the profound, reveres the natural over the artificial, and generally prefers authentic action ending in failure, suffering, and death to inauthentic passivity enduring through a “reasonable” and “happy” life. Romanticism uses organic metaphors: birth, growth, decay, hunger, instinct, death. It tends to prefer language over reason, meaning over truth, folklore over history, the rural over the urban, the ancient over the new. In its opposition to enlightenment efforts to quantify and reduce everything to rational universal categories, romanticism protects and venerates the particular, the contingent, and the irreducible: poetry, heroes, tradition.

Neither tendency corresponds to a specific form of modern politics or religion. There are enlightenment modern religions and romantic modern religions and modern religions with an eclectic mix of enlightenment and romantic themes. Where modern religion wants to justify itself to enlightenment sensibilities it is presented as rational or at least compatible with a rational life; where modern religion wants to justify itself to

romantic sensibilities it is presented as *sui generis* or as a source of genuine authority to fill the void left by artificial enlightenment constructions. A list of enlightenment and romantic justifications for religion, state, and nation would be endless.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century contains a near infinite variety of combinations thrown together for the sake of legitimacy: romantic secularism, enlightenment religious nationalism, romantic liberalism, etc. Each case looks extremely different of course: in different languages, in different clothes, with different food, different music, theorized differently, referring to different books, different heroes, different histories – each case has its own aesthetic. But nothing modern can be left unexplained or unjustified, least of all legitimacy. So modern religion, the modern state, and the modern nation all compete and collaborate to legitimize themselves in a game that always pits the romantic against the enlightener, and vice versa, dramatizing their interdependence all the while.

Among the most potent modern hybrids of enlightenment and romantic sensibilities is the category of “race.” From the beginning, modern European nation-states generated wealth by expanding their rule into territories around the globe which they presumed to be populated by “pre-modern” people: that is, by stateless, primitive, irrational, hyper-sexual, animalistic, feminine, childlike people without history, literature, or true religion. Predictably, among European romantics such people were, well, romanticized as natural, authentic, inherently peaceful, and truly free.

But overall, Europeans saw themselves as members of a “race” biologically determined to achieve modern greatness. Whether it was romantic greatness through literary genius and fierce individuality or enlightenment greatness through scientific discovery and rational religion, Europeans believed themselves *racially* destined for greatness. And this racial destiny was the justification for imperialistic expansion and colonial rule throughout the world; the idea of race was a port of embarkation for the global dominance of the modern configuration. Thus, wherever the modern configuration emerged, the idea of different “races,” with different biological dispositions and different cultural talents, could be found entangled with nation, state, culture, religion, and all the rest. Justified by enlightenment science or romantic literary theory, race provided yet another means to fill the void of legitimacy in the modern world.

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century almost every inch of land on the planet Earth was dominated by some state, and every state was claimed on behalf of some nation. Everywhere, nations demanded “self-determination”: a state with a flag and a seat at the United Nations. And the birth of every new nation-state (whether in Africa, Asia, the Americas, Eastern Europe, or anywhere else) seemed to produce dynamics roughly similar to those that had also emerged in Europe: some population was identified as alien and threatening, and the nation-state was forged as one set of elites and masses collaboratively persecuted and excluded those of the “alien” population.

European and Anglophone observers have often attributed the violent conflicts in these new nation-states to “ethnic nationalism” or “religious nationalism.” The origins of these nation-states are thus meant to be distinguished from the alleged “liberal nationalist” origins of European nation-states (a case of convenient amnesia given what has already been said about religious exclusion and persecution at the root of European modernity). This is a standard secular enlightenment strategy tinged with racist overtones: “liberal” is meant to signal praiseworthy rationality and universality, while

“ethnic” and “religious” are meant to evoke contemptible backwardness and particularity. The use of this strategy to privilege European pedigree suggests a racial justification for European “superiority.”

Some other constituents of the modern configuration that came into clear view in the 20<sup>th</sup> century also color religion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: the idea that enlightenment values serve only to perpetuate the dominance of elites in a capitalist world economy – “owners” – and that only revolution can produce truly egalitarian “workers” values; the idea of a nefarious conspiratorial cabal – usually identified as urban, homosexual, intellectual, cosmopolitan, or Jewish – threatening “the common people” by exploiting new opportunities in the modern world; the idea that the modern configuration itself is a form of domination and that because we can’t think our way out of it – since it saturates everything we think, believe and imagine – our only recourse is to catastrophic or suicidal violence.

Religions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century fight racism and exacerbate racism; they critique capitalism and exploit capitalism; they inspire populist mobs and protect scapegoats; they legitimize modernity and they glamorize suicidal violence against the modern world itself. In each case, what counts as religion – or Islam, or Christianity, or Buddhism, or Hinduism, etc. – emerges in the contentious environment I have described as the modern configuration. It may be tempting to criticize the presumption underlying this essay: that the modern configuration is global in scope and only masked by local variations and interpretations. It may seem reductive, insensitive to context, and even imperialistic. But it is hard to imagine that such a plea for the irreducible, the contextual, and the local is anything other than another iteration of the utterly modern romantic tendency.

To be sure, every religion refers to a distinctive tradition with unique qualities that determine how it is expressed, institutionalized, and legitimized in the modern world. And truly, the meaning of a specific religion (or of religion in general) to any particular person might as well be infinitely variable. It is therefore unlikely that the modern configuration – even as it becomes more and more pervasive – will eventually produce identical societies or forms of government or types of religion everywhere in the world. Nor should we assume that the pervasiveness of the modern configuration will necessarily culminate in a global consensus on the legitimacy of any particular modern idea: like liberalism, secularism, or religious nationalism.

And a modern person will be suspicious of the idea that one religion is the quintessentially modern religion, while all other religions are a threat to the modern world. Of course, this will be no less suspicious than the claim that a particular religion is external to the modern configuration. This claim will be especially suspicious when the justification is that the allegedly non-modern religion has hierarchical institutions, or demands a life of obedience, or derives from an authoritative tradition, or privileges the community over the individual, or is authentic and not constructed. These are already recognizable romantic justifications for legitimacy internal to the modern configuration. Religions defining themselves against the modern will often employ the standard romantic strategy of identifying modern with enlightenment, and then claiming pre-modern or post-modern legitimacy.

At the same time, it would be silly to believe that the modern configuration will define all of human life forever. In fact, there are reasons to think that some of the

foundational institutions and categories of the modern configuration are already starting to lose their coherence. States are weakened by global corporations; national identity is fractured by transnational social movements; the scientific method has drawn its own objectivity into question; both enlightenment and romantic justifications for legitimacy seem dangerous having been complicit in a 20<sup>th</sup> century bloodied by world wars, genocide, nuclear holocaust, and economic exploitation.

Religion may also be in transition, able to cover new ground if the state, the nation, and science are giving way. Indeed, modern religion – justified in modern terms, organized in modern institutions – may no longer correspond to the everyday lives of its presumed adherents. If this is the case, we will likely find modern religions arguing desperately for their relevance, exaggerating their importance, and reveling in nostalgic lamentations (all of which suggest, of course, that the days of their self-evident relevance and importance are past). On the other hand, such argument, exaggeration, and nostalgia could merely represent familiar expressions of the standard modern crisis of legitimacy. It's hard to know. If the modern configuration loses its hold on reality, it will likely be very difficult for us to recognize the transition to whatever comes next.

There may still be people who do not live in the modern configuration: for whom the word “religion” does not exist to be distinguished from things like culture, politics, or literature; people who have no “ism” to put on a list of religions. Such people might do things, say things, and think things that we will desperately want to call “religion.” But if we succumb to our temptation to describe what they do, say and think *as* religion, we unilaterally convert them *to* religion.

I suspect that if you are reading this, and it has not been entirely unintelligible, then you already have a religion (or you decidedly *do not* have a religion). So far in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the general idea of religion, the diverse array of particular religions, *my* religion, *your* religion, the religion that you or I reject, all remain a part of the landscape that we must navigate whenever we set out to describe the world as it is and imagine the world as it should be.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

First a quick note on method: I have formulated these generalizations not as an external observer of modernity, but as a self-reflective modern person. The romantic in me would have you respond to this essay as you would respond to a painting: to squint your eyes and ask yourself, “does this capture something true about my world?” But the enlightenment tendency in me is compelled to provide some “evidence.” Below you will find a list of the sources that have informed my view. Not all of them are compatible with one another – readers interested in examining these sources will see where I have sided with one author over another. Reluctantly, I have not listed primary sources, which would result in bibliographical excess.

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**Configuration:** I am aware that the term, as I use it, resembles the German term *Gestalt*, and that “configuration” has been an English translation of *Gestalt*. My own sense of our ability to perceive the way that everything modern “hangs together” is closer to Ludwig Wittgenstein’s account of “aspect perception”: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1999), especially Part II, p. 193 and p. 210. When I say that everything modern is “defined in relation to” the modern configuration, I mean: the modern character of something will dawn on us when we recognize its resemblance to the family of modern things.

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## **What Counts as “Religion” in the Interreligious Movement?**

**By Jeff Israel**

As we have seen in the previous essay, religion is not the only ambiguous category taken for granted in everyday language. Terms like nation, state, society, and culture are every bit as contentious as the term religion. And, of course, none of these crucial terms remain open-ended and ambiguous for long: as soon as anyone asks who belongs and who doesn't belong in one of these categories, interested parties immediately define it in their favor.

Our definition of “religion” and “religious” will have profound consequences for the interreligious movement and its impact. If the interreligious movement is a growing network of institutions, communities and individuals building positive relationships between diverse religions, what counts as a “religion”? What do religious institutions, communities and individuals share in common that makes them *religious*? How has the history of the movement limited the scope of its definition of religion? Who is privileged by the dominant definition? Who is excluded?

I will not offer definitive answers to these questions here. But the interreligious movement cannot take for granted that such questions have already been adequately addressed. Having endured an inconsistent history marked by noble intentions, presumptuousness, moral courage, naiveté, and visionary perseverance, the interreligious movement now has the task of achieving healthy self-awareness.

Recent intellectual trends emphasizing “otherness” and the value of difference over similarity, have already served to chasten the theological pretensions of the interreligious past. The grand universal proclamations of a common faith uniting all religions, which characterized many speeches at the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893 in Chicago (often considered the first modern interreligious event on a worldwide scale), are increasingly less fashionable.

And yet, with the ambiguity of “religion” unattended, participants in the interreligious movement are left to rely on sentimental echoes of past and present intellectual trends, which are too often insufficiently scrutinized. I will offer five definitions of religion below. All of them are problematic, historically determined, and loaded with assumptions and values. To be clear: none of these definitions is meant to be *the* definition of religion. Instead, taken together, they are supposed to highlight the nuances of the category of religion as it is commonly used. They are presented to illustrate what we might mean when we talk about religion in the interreligious movement. Do we even know what we mean?

It is not uncommon to find any or all of these definitions, in various combinations and versions, expressed in contemporary literature on the interreligious movement and among its participants. Please try on each definition to see if it fits. I will offer brief comments on their origins, meaning, and significance for your consideration. But these definitions are presented to provoke self-reflection: how do they compare to your own definition of religion? What are the consequences of your view?

**1. *Religions aspire to universality and unity in the truth of a singular and transcendent divinity; what is genuinely religious, therefore, is always universal and unencumbered by ethnic, cultural, or national partiality or particularity.***

This view echoes 19<sup>th</sup> century European comparative theology. According to theologians following this track, “world religions” or “universal religions” should be distinguished from merely “national religions” or “particularistic religions,” which are historically regressive and preoccupied with parochial concerns. “World religions” are characterized as clean, clear, pure, perfect channels to universally accessible truth; “national religions” are characterized as rough, uncultured, local, superstitious, primitive sources of political justification for regional despots and oligarchs.

The prevalence of this account of religion among European scholars in the period of colonial domination compelled many colonized people around the world (and minorities within Europe) to translate their own ways of life into its terms. Indeed, the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions saw many participants protesting that their religions should be assigned the lofty appellation: “world religion;” many even sought to be accepted as the “world religion” *par excellence*. On the other hand, the speeches of participants also reveal early intimations of a revolt against the sensibilities underlying this view.

The legacy of the “world religions” discourse is manifest in every effort to disqualify religious nationalist leaders as legitimate religious authorities. It is also apparent wherever the category of religion is presumed to refer only to systematic beliefs concerning God, truth, and transcendence; the idea that sovereignty, social order, and law are not properly “religious” matters, but rather, “political” matters, is also part of the legacy of the “world religions” discourse. This view of religion may also be reflected in the term “interfaith,” which suggests that religions are essentially about “faith” in “divinity” and not, say, community standards of behavior, ritual, or institutional authority.

**2. *Religion is a useful delusion; it compensates for scientific ignorance, the fear of death, anxiety about a meaningless chaotic existence, or some other stress-condition; religious zeal, providing a divine warrant for human interests, while delusional, is a useful resource for mobilizing collective action towards social or political ends.***

This statement reflects the influential language of 20<sup>th</sup> century social science – particularly sociology, psychology, and anthropology – which has tried to account for the function of religion by translating religion and the religious into its own terms. Such a view often coincides with a “secularization theory.” There are different types of secularization theories. Generally, they either assume that (a) “religious needs” caused by the normal stress-conditions of human life will be met in secular ways as people progress into the modern world (by the nation, or literature, or science) or (b) life in the modern world will dissolve “religious needs.” Theories that presume the dissolution of “religious needs” often depict religious people as nostalgic for an obsolete way of life or too weak or cowardly to face the real world with the clarity of modern glasses.

The legacy of this view is apparent wherever avowedly “religious” justifications for actions or institutions are dismissed as mere rhetoric; in these cases, the actions or institutions in question are usually presumed “in fact” to be motivated by “economic” or “political” conditions or concerns. This view also underlies interreligious work that is narrowly focused on utilitarian outcomes: where interreligious cooperation is solely a pragmatic tool applied to fair resource distribution, conflict resolution, or other kinds of problem solving. In such instances, goals like spiritual edification, transcendence, reflection on the sacred or the holy, self-exploration and theological convergence – associated with alternative definitions of religion – are marginalized as foolish, naïve, flakey, and lacking in worldly seriousness.

- 3. *Religions are moral communities; every religion, in its own way, aims toward peace, justice, and the good life for all human beings; what is properly religious is always moral; when so-called “religions” are immoral, they are either not religions at all, or they are religions being manipulated, corrupted, or hijacked by nationalist, ethnic, cultural, ideological, or some other non-religious interests.***

Echoed in this view is a form of liberal-rationalism that has been influential throughout the world and is evident in “liberal religion” and “liberal theology” wherever they are found. This view is very close cousins with the first view (the “world religions” discourse) and it is difficult to distinguish them at times. For our purposes, let’s say: view #1 differentiates world religions from national religions and characterizes world religions as providing universal access to truth and transcendence; this view (#3), on the other hand, uses the term religion *exclusively* to refer to communities that foster and follow the universal moral law (this view associates religion with universal *morality* more than universal *truth*). According to this liberal-rationalist view, there are certain moral rules that all genuine religions promote; religions preach and preserve these moral rules in stories about moral heroes and in the symbolic languages of theology and prayer.

The legacy of this definition of religion is evident whenever religions are presumed to endorse moral virtues associated with liberal-rationalism like: individual autonomy, social equality irrespective of gender or caste, disdain for hierarchical authority, fairness or reasonableness. This view also presumes that religions will be happily relegated to private life and will serve the common good as morally persuasive and edifying institutions with no aspirations to coercive political power.

Since liberal states find liberal religions most palatable, wherever liberal states are dominant religions tend to present themselves as inherently liberal (or at least compatible with a liberal political order). Of course, under the same conditions members of a religion can alternatively style themselves as anti-liberal agitators or religious conservatives (by “conservative” I mean, in this case, a view that concedes authority to the liberal modern state but lobbies for laws and policies purportedly derived from a source of traditional authority that transcends or precedes the state).

The liberal definition of religion will never allow that religion is a cause of conflict or a source of malevolence; malevolence can only proceed from someone “acting in the name of religion.” The influence of the liberal definition of religion is revealed

when leaders espousing views antithetical to liberal morality on behalf of a specific religion are dismissed as inauthentic or self-interested, while *liberal* leaders identified with the very same religion are validated and recognized as authentic religious authorities.

***4. Religions express a profound experience of the sacred, the infinite in the finite, the holy, or the ultimate; religious experience touches the deepest level of meaning in our lives and every religion, in its own way, articulates this profound quality of the human experience.***

This manner of talking about religion has a long history, but it gained particular prominence in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A presumed distance between the sort of religious experience described here and “institutionalized religion” has allied this sensibility with another common tendency in the interreligious movement: adding “spirituality” and “spiritual” next to “religion” and “religious.” The emergence of this definition of religion made it possible to say: “I’m not religious, but I am spiritual.”

This view has been particularly attractive to participants in the interreligious movement: if the same generic religious experience is expressed differently by every religion, then members of different religions may have a natural foundation for dialogue and mutual respect. This view is in evidence whenever members of different religions are presumed to share an intuitive understanding of concepts like “the sacred,” “the holy,” or “the ultimate.”

This approach also tends to presume a kinship between religion and art: it suggests that like art (whether in the form of music, sculpture, painting, or any other medium), religion can confront an individual with a profound experience unmediated by institutional authority or even the trappings of language. Similarly, this definition of religion is manifest in the idea that members of different religions can have religious experiences by participating in each other’s rituals and ceremonies; it is assumed that one need not be integrated in a particular religious way of life in order to achieve religious experiences through its religious activities.

And what is more, just as views #1 and #3 above dismiss national partiality and ritual obligation as mere encumbrances to the real “essence of religion” – presumably universal truth or morality – this view (#4) likewise dismisses claims of exclusivity and *sui generis* religiosity as placing unnecessary limitations on the universal religious experience.

***5. Religions are radically distinctive systems of meaning that organize the lives of those who live within them; there is no content to the category “religion,” other than as a place-holder, and there is nothing “religious” we can identify among so-called “religions” by comparing them; we must respect the distinctiveness of the organizing systems within which others live by deferring to them and allowing them to define themselves.***

This is a very current view among participants in the interreligious movement. It ties together strands from the romantic tendency in the modern configuration (see the

previous essay), the turn from reason to language in 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy, Marxism, and movements for national self-determination in the post-colonial “Third World.” This view reflects an ethos associated with terms like multiculturalism, pluralism, the politics of difference, identity politics, and the politics of recognition.

It will seem particularly attractive to anyone with a preexisting commitment to the modern, and indeed liberal, principle of autonomy: demanding that religious people be allowed to define themselves is similar to demanding that all people be allowed to vote for their leaders (defining their political lives) or express themselves freely (defining their role and influence in the public sphere); allowing others to define themselves seems like an attractive way to avoid infringing on their liberty. For people with liberal sensibilities, this definition seems to avoid some of the uncomfortable presumptuousness implicit in other definitions.

Almost paradoxically, though, this view will also seem attractive to those who want to define themselves *in opposition to* the liberal current in the modern configuration (see the previous essay). If “religion” is a mere placeholder for incommensurable systems of meaning, then there is no justification for using liberal morality to judge the beliefs, practices, and authoritative structures of non-liberal or anti-liberal religions. Under this view, the application of liberal moral principles (or any purportedly universal moral principles) across lines of religious difference can only be a strategy used by one meaning system to dominate another.

The seeming paradox, of course, is that this view (#5) is given a positive moral evaluation from the perspective of liberal moral principles, but at the same time invalidates moral evaluation from the perspective of *any* purportedly universal moral principles (including liberal moral principles). If the interreligious movement reflects a desire to see different religions relate more like friends than enemies, this view negates any impartial justification for such a desire.

Further, this aversion to any substantive definition of religion can result in a parsimonious attitude toward interreligious work: authorized religious representatives, from closed religious worlds, will cooperate with counterparts from other religions when there is a perceived advantage in doing so. On this view, the interreligious movement cannot be motivated by shared moral principles; it can only seek to facilitate pragmatic projects that exploit coincidental moments of mutual self-interest among diverse religious representatives.

But view #5 deserves an addendum: as a Jewish person participating in an interreligious event I might be asked, as a way of respecting my difference and avoiding preconceptions, to offer my own uniquely Jewish rationale for participation in the interreligious movement. I might respond saying:

***I am commanded by God to “love him [the stranger] as yourself” (Leviticus 19:34) and admonished by the prophet Micah that what is good, and what the Lord requires of me is “to do justice, love compassion, and walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). Through participation in the interreligious movement, I can observe these commandments.***

This version of my obligation as a Jew has its own history. In particular, it reflects an emphasis on seemingly universal ethical passages in the Torah, which compliment political sentiments already popular among modern Jews of a certain class; these passages are privileged over less hospitable elements in the Jewish legal tradition, for instance, that are meant carefully to segregate Jews from the non-Jewish world. Does this choice of emphasis reflect something uniquely Jewish or a more or less unconscious effort to conform Judaism to the liberal definition of religion? I suspect that this question could be asked of anyone else offering his or her religion's "unique justification" for participation in the interreligious movement. So, even as view #5 seems to protect difference, it may end up exaggerating differences where similarities (shared concepts and a common vocabulary) appear self-evident.

Obviously I have not provided an exhaustive account of how we talk about religion in the interreligious movement. And it is worth clarifying that none of the views presented here are necessarily wrong or foolish. Nor should any of them be dismissed solely because of their origins. And to be fair, each of these views deserves to be restated or defended vigorously by those who might identify with them. And, furthermore, the summary historical remarks following each statement are speculative and brief, requiring real evidence and exposition to be persuasive (including an account of the many cases of overlap among these views). What is important is that each view comes with consequences, each sets boundaries, each includes and excludes, each makes claims about the world that may be more or less true, and each frames the interreligious conversation in a way that may be more or less appropriate.

Under these conditions the interreligious movement need only assert definitively that the categories of religion and the religious are unavoidable and worthwhile as a conceptual meeting place for its participants. The difficult and exciting work of articulating our commitments, defining our terms, being responsible to our histories, traditions, and communities, critically engaging our ideas and motivations, and marking the limits of our common concerns – can all occur at this meeting place.

### **Bibliographical Note:**

This essay is meant only to provoke reflection on the definition of religion; it should be obvious that I have not tried to cover the range of possible definitions or the theoretical questions presented by scholarship on this subject. In formulating the above definitions, I have referred to the implicit claims of hundreds of mission statements and other documents produced by participants in the interreligious movement, which I have read in the process of compiling this report. My approach to the category of religion has also been influenced by the following works, which I recommend to the interested reader:

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